

*Cass. Chronicles by the way.*  
*Robert Bell.*

# CHRONICLES BY THE WAY.

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A SERIES OF LETTERS ADDRESSED TO THE

MONTREAL "GAZETTE,"

DESCRIPTIVE OF A TRIP THROUGH

## MANITOBA AND THE NORTH-WEST.

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Montreal :

PRINTED BY THE GAZETTE PRINTING COMPANY.

1879.



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### LETTER I.

MONTREAL TO WINNIPEG—COMPANIONSHIP IN TRAVEL—THE GREAT WEST AND ITS INFLUENCE—A DISAPPOINTMENT—A CANADIAN COLLECTOR STOPPING TRAVEL—MINNEAPOLIS AND ITS INDUSTRIES.

MINNEAPOLIS, 16th August, 1879.

The trip from Montreal to Winnipeg is happily no longer a novelty. It has been taken by so many as to have become tolerably familiar, either by actual experience, or from descriptions given of it in the press by those who have "done" the journey, that "I shall not trouble you with any details, except as will hereafter appear, by way of warning to those who may contemplate doing it during this season. Three days and a half is the usual time, and, no mishap occurring, the distance can be covered in that time. So that, compared with the experiences of the hardy nor'-westers who fur-traded in the prairie wilderness, or even with the settlers who have recently sought to make other trade than that in the furs of animals, our lots have been cast in pleasant places. The traveller has but to take the Grand Trunk Railway at night; the next night brings him to Detroit; and the following morning, after a comfortable breakfast in the Pullman dining car, into Chicago. He can leave there at ten o'clock, and reach St Paul the following morning at six, and he ought immediately

to start for St. Vincent, and he could do so but at this point begins the inscrutable mysteries of travel, which I will refer to hereafter. As it is, he remains over until five in the evening—a fact important to be remembered, because if so disposed he can spend the day in Chicago instead of St. Paul, making close connection at this point. He reaches St. Vincent the following evening and takes the boat to Winnipeg or the train to St. Boniface, making either point some time the next morning—that is, I am told he does, but as I have not reached that point yet, it is perhaps as well that he should not be too certain, in so far as he will depend upon the information contained in this letter—until I report further from Winnipeg. Count that up, and it will puzzle you to know how the journey is made in three days and a half. But then it must be remembered that, judging by the time consumed, it is further from Montreal to Winnipeg than from Winnipeg to Montreal. The St. Paul and Pacific comes, in the latter case, happily at the commencement instead of the end of the journey; and after leaving it, close connections can be made to your city, and the twelve hours detention to which I have referred, can be avoided.

It is astonishing how much the pleasure of a journey depends upon your luck in falling in with companionable people travelling in the same direction. This is especially the case in ocean travelling, but a railway journey is subject largely to the same influence. The difference is that in the former case you are doomed to the same companionship for the eight days,

while in the latter it is an ever varying change, a picture of human life, at each station some disappearing, in so far as you are concerned, for all time, while others embark on the journey to disappear again in their turn. The passengers in the aggregate on a railway train are not a matter of much account to the individual passenger; while on board a ship a human hog in petticoats or breeches can make a whole ship's passengers miserable, until in very desperation they turn upon the animal and crush it. But railway travelling owes much of its comfort to the factor of companionship. I was fortunate in this respect. My first was a Chicago Canadian, and that is saying a good deal for him, for Canada has no reason to blush for the record which her sons are making in the great centre of commerce and vice. He was an old ship's companion, who had shared with me the discomforts of that wretched fourteen days' voyage in the City of London, which followed immediately upon that in which the ill-fated "City of Boston" so mysteriously disappeared. After recalling the incidents of the voyage for a while, we lapsed into a conversation on the country and its prospects. My friend is an intense western man. With that enthusiasm, which is at once the cause and consequence of western development, he argues every question from the standpoint of the great west. "There is a levelling process going on," said he, as he looked out upon the magnificent fields, giving evidence of the abundant harvest they had or were yielding, and the comfortable homesteads and out-buildings which showed forth the thrift of the husbandman. "There is a levelling process going on, not only here but all over the continent, and even in Europe. Their farmers can't maintain the high price of their lands, which is the measure of their wealth, in presence of events in the Great West. They hold their lands at from seventy-five to a hundred and fifty or two hundred dollars an acre. But that can't last. Who will pay that, when with the price of a good sized garden patch he can have his pick of a farm in the Western territories or Manitoba." "The increasing facilities of transportation," he continued, "are removing the objections of distance, and the cost is infinitely more than made up by the greater productiveness, and the superior quality of the production in the Western Country, and depend upon it, it is a case of there we go

up, up, up, and here, and in Europe, we go down, down, down." That is the Western idea in a nutshell, and any one can judge for himself how much there is in it. Of course it will be remembered that coming from Chicago, my friend takes wheat as the basis of all argument in relation to the value of land. If he could get rid of this idea—to a Chicagoan an impossibility—he might, perhaps, modify somewhat his opinion as to the inevitable decadence of the eastern farmer.

At Toronto, I fell in with a couple of gentlemen whose destination was Manitoba; one was a well-known Nova Scotian, a man who adds to a strong vigorous ability in public matters, a fond of anecdote, and a familiarity with the poets, whom he quotes at will without the slightest affectation or pedantry, and the other a young Canadian who has recently passed creditable examinations in European schools of mines. I was glad to meet them; and have had still greater reason for satisfaction, as the incidents of the journey have developed. This morning, on nearing St. Paul, I asked the sleeping car porter at what time the train by the St. Paul & Pacific left for St. Vincent. "Seven twenty," he replied, sententiously. How far is the station from that at which we stop "Two squares," and the porter having thus relieved himself of what turned out not to be very valuable information went on with his work, putting up the berths. Presently the inevitable baggage porter came along. "Want any baggage checked for hotels or any part of the city?" "At what hour does the train on the St. Paul and Pacific start for St. Vincent?" I enquired. "To-morrow night at five o'clock; any baggage to check?" "But I mean the first train." "That's the first train; only one train a day, every evening at five o'clock, except Saturday. No train leaves on Saturday." Here was a pleasant surprise for us! We were due in Winnipeg on Sunday morning, according to the general statement, three days and a half from Montreal to Manitoba, and here was a thirty-six hours' detention! We made the best of it, however; got breakfast at the Merchants' Hotel, did the city in the morning, and came on to this more important point—as the Minneapolis call it—by the noon train.

Minneapolis is a very flourishing city, with all the evidences of commercial activity and of increasing individual wealth. It is the centre of the saw mill and flour mill interest

for the Northwest, there being at this point on the Mississippi a magnificent water power. With the single exception of one mill at New Orleans, the largest flouring mills in America are here. I visited one to-day, a fine stone building, with its seven hundred and fifty horse-power, its thirty run of stones, and a capacity of turning out fifteen hundred barrels of flour daily. Another still larger is being built, which is to have forty run of stones, and there are some eight or ten of them altogether. It is only twenty-three years since the first building was erected in this city, and to-day it has a population of fifty thousand, about ten thousand more than the older city of St. Paul. It is a monument of western development, and made me feel that if my friend, to whom I referred in the earlier part of my letter, was wrong in his views on the levelling process, he was more than right in his enthusiastic admiration for the Great West.

## LETTER II.

CANADIAN BANK BILLS—THE INGRATITUDE  
OF CORPORATIONS—OVER THE PRAIRIES  
—THE WHEAT CROP—NEW RAILWAY  
ENTERPRISE—HOW MONTREAL WILL BE  
AFFECTED.

{ ON THE TRAIN, CROSSING THE PRAIRIES.  
18th August, 1879.

The news of Canadian bank disasters has reached the Far West. It was a novel experience to learn that there were places in civilized countries, where the bills of the Bank of Montreal itself were regarded as unsafe. At the hotel at Minneapolis, the obliging clerk would not take Canadian bills of any kind; and when I ventured to suggest that bills of the largest private banking corporation in the world should be good, he looked at me with a knowing stare, as if he should say, "excuse me, we don't know much in this western country, but we do know a trick worth two of that." If the hotel-man was incredulous, the St. Paul and Pacific Railway officials I thought, would know better. So I boldly presented myself at the ticket office, and offered Bank of Montreal bills. "Can't you give me American money?" said the gentlemanly official. "Why

surely these bills should be as good as American money at this office at any rate," I replied. "Sorry, sir, but I have to obey instructions. If I take these bills I must charge you a discount," and I went away reflecting upon the ingratitude of human nature. Here was an enterprise which owed much to the Bank of Montreal, I thought; which has been carried to completion by money furnished by the Bank of Montreal. I could not help reflecting that so great service deserved better treatment than the depreciation of the paper of the benefactor.

At five thirty-eight we left Minneapolis and stopped for supper at a little place called Minnekouka, situated on the lake of that name. It is a charming place for a summer resort, and the lake, studded with sail and row boats, indicated that this was the popular view. The St. Paul and Pacific Railway runs excursion trains out from St. Paul during the day, so that people can get a whiff of fresh air at least once a week during the summer months. The fact rather dissipated the respect which we were beginning to feel for the Sabbatarianism of the railway authorities in declining to run their train all day Sunday, and thus subjecting passengers who happened to reach St. Paul on Saturday morning to thirty-six hours' detention. Fairly on the road, we soon forgot the disappointments in the enjoyment of the journey. The road is a well appointed one; the sleeping cars, owned by the Company, though smaller than the Pullman, are most comfortable, and the porter, upon whom so much depends, as any one can realize by recalling a journey with a sulky surly one, quick and obliging. We woke up in time for breakfast at Glyndon, the junction of the St. Paul and Pacific and the Northern Pacific, and were at this point joined by passengers, among them Mr. O'Hanly, of Ottawa, who goes up to take charge of the survey of some townships in the Northwest, who had come by the lakes and were enthusiastic in their appreciation of the pleasures of the journey.

The prairie has been so often described that I will not attempt a description of it. An immense expanse, bounded only by the horizon, with nothing to break the view but an occasional settler's house, or stacks of prairie hay or wheat; the long grass waving under the wind, giving a melancholy cadence like that of a sea on the pebbly shore; such is the prairie as I see it from the win-

dow of the car. Here and there are belts of wood, chiefly elm, and these must be treasures of their owners. At the different stations, little hamlets, the premonition of future towns and cities, have been planted. I am opposite one of them as I write, and am reminded of how rapidly some of the arts of civilization penetrate the wilderness. There are half a dozen stores, nearly every building in fact being a store, and one restaurant as it appears; but what attracted attention was the fact that in the centre of the room—or building, for there was but one room—was a billiard table, at which a couple of young men were having a game. If they never take to worse amusement, as a recreation, than a game of billiards, they may be considered as tolerably safe. We see large expanses with the wheat cut, and in sheaf, and at one point the steam thrasher is at work. The wheat crop in the State it is said is not panning out as well as it promised to do. The *St. Paul Pioneer* of Saturday refers to the fact, and states that there is considerable disappointment among the farmers at the result. Such information as I could get from those in a position to give it was in the same sense, the general testimony being that the average of the state will not be much over ten bushels to the acre.

Even that average gives an enormous aggregate, and the question of transportation becomes the burning question of the Northwest as producers, and of the East as carriers and shippers. I hear of another scheme which is said to be backed by strong influence in which Montreal and Quebec have a very decided interest. It is said that a party leaves St. Paul this week to go over the ground. It is a proposal to build a railway from St. Paul to Sault Ste. Marie, crossing at that point, and then proceeding to connect with the Canadian Pacific Railway north of Lake Nipissing. If any of my readers will take the time to look at the map, they will find that the line from St. Paul to Montreal is almost a direct one. The estimate is that a train leaving St. Paul by the proposed route will reach tide water at Montreal in between three and four hundred miles less distance than by the present routes via Chicago and south of the lakes. That difference is certain to settle the question of transport by the northern line, and to ensure its construction. And as St. Paul is now the distributing point for the north-west country, it is not difficult to estimate the numerous advantages certain to result from such a rail-

way. A comparatively short line from Duluth would connect with it, and thus make it the eastern outlet for the Northern Pacific, as well as of the trade of the Canadian Northwest coming over the line from Winnipeg to Pembina.

I hope no patriotic Canadian will become excited over the fact that a large part of this line, when built, will be in United States territory, that it will be built with United States money, and controlled by United States enterprise and energy. I remember that the idea embodied in this scheme is substantially the same as that which Sir Hugh Allan propounded in his Peterboro speech. It is true that in his case he did not make St. Paul an objective point. His proposal was to carry the line north of Lake Huron, to cross at the Sault, and thence to connect with the Northern Pacific at Duluth. But it had the same result in view, that of making the Northwest, both American and Canadian, tributary to Canadian shipping interests. He was denounced as a traitor for the suggestion. The *Globe* and its satellites pointed out how settlement in Manitoba would be impeded by Yankee immigration bummers attacking the immigrants on the American part of the road and inducing them to settle in the United States. A road exclusively on Canadian territory was declared to be the only thing worthy of Canadian support. That is seven years ago. The *Globe's* friends have been in office during five of those years, and what have they done? They left office with a link of a hundred and eighty miles of the line from Thunder Bay to Selkirk inlet, with the Pembina branch incomplete, simply in the interests of the Donald A. Smith and Kitson clique of anti-Canadian manipulators. We ought to have had by this time a Canadian summer route to carry immigrants into our Northwest territories, and we would have had it but that the interests of the clique required postponement, and the late Government could not resist the appeal. But the question of getting the grain of the Northwest out is an entirely different question from that of getting immigration in, and it is in the interest of the former that I hope to see the scheme I have referred to carried out. Upon the success of such enterprises in the West, and upon the success of the Harbour Commissioners and the Government combined in lessening the expenses of the port of Montreal in the East, must depend the future of your city as a great shipping point for the produce of America.



## LETTER III.

RAILWAY RIVALRY AND RAILWAY TIME TABLES—  
AMERICAN IMMIGRATION AGENTS AND THEIR  
UNPATRIOTIC ALLIES—ST. BONIFACE TO WIN-  
NIPEG—THE CAPITAL AND ITS APPEARANCE.

WINNIPEG, August, 19, 1879.

There are two ways of getting into this city, and thereby hangs the tale which explains the time-table arrangements of the St. Paul and Pacific Railway. We can come in by train by the Pembina division of the Canada Pacific Railway; or we can come by boat by the famous Kitson-Hill steamers, now, I believe, controlled if not owned by the St. Paul and Pacific Railway. The Pembina branch is leased by the Government to Upper & Co, who are now running it. Its experience—as to construction, has not been a happy one, and it is not yet ballasted; so that it takes four hours and a half to do the sixty-five miles. There is strong opposition between these two routes; and the St. Paul and Pacific, holding the whip-handle, are able to make that by water in all respects the more pleasant. Why passengers from the east are detained twelve hours in St. Paul is easily understood in the light of this rivalry. If the train started, as reasonably it should do, from St. Paul on the arrival of that from Chicago in the morning, passengers would arrive at St. Vincent at six o'clock in the morning instead of six o'clock in the evening, and with day light, and the prospect of reaching Winnipeg about noon, the boats, which, in that case, would only reach at night, would stand a poorer chance of competing. They would still have the advantage of a sail up the river by day-light, which, with those to whom a few hours was not a matter of much consequence, would be a strong temptation; but the business current would pass over the railway, and that is precisely what is not wanted by the St. Paul and Pacific. This, after all, is human nature, and my reflections must be taken as explanatory rather than condemnatory. But it did seem, when we arrived at St. Vincent, as if the policy was carried a step too far. The junction is a few hundred yards from the steamboat landing, and it would not appear to be an excess of courtesy to have stopped so that passengers going on by rail might disembark for supper, before changing cars. But as supper, and I believe a very comfortable one, is served on the

the steamer, there is an additional reason for embarrassing travellers by rail, and the train runs down to the steamboat landing, remaining there long enough to discharge baggage, and then leisurely moves back to the junction. The conductor on the Pembina branch is fortunately an obliging young man, and he detained the train long enough to permit us to have a hurried meal. In spite of these efforts to force travel by the steamers, the majority of the passengers took the train.

We had an opportunity of realizing how desperate are the efforts of the United States land and immigration agents, to prevent immigrants from settling in Manitoba. Among the passengers were a young man and his wife and child, with a brother, just arrived from Ireland, evidently respectable well-to-do Irish Protestants; and another family from the neighborhood of Kingston. They said they had been greatly discouraged by the stories told them by people on the train as they came on, of the miserable condition of Manitoba and the Northwest, and the greater advantages of settling in Minnesota or Dakota. To strangers going into a strange country, it is not wonderful that these stories have their depressing influence. We had a chance of learning soon how persistent are these inducements and misrepresentations. A tall intelligent-looking man, farmer-like in his appearance, without the slightest air of officialdom about him, struck up a conversation with the party, and with a glibness that was simply marvellous, and that surely sprang from some other motive than a fixed salary, he descanted on the greater advantages of the States over the Canadian Northwest for settlers. It was bad enough that these bums should be on the track of immigrants to Canada on American railways. But here was one following up the prey through Canadian territory, to the very door of their future home. What is being done to counteract this kind of thing I don't know. That something should be done all will admit, and it is fortunate for Canada that the department whose duty it is to look after this branch of the public service, is presided over by so clear-headed and practical a man as the present Minister of Agriculture.

It is a pity that the spirit of party is so strong as to give as the most valuable allies of these American agents a portion of the Canadian press. The *Winnipeg Free Press* is a well conducted, enterprising paper, whose proprietors have given the best possi-

"Monday afternoon a representative of the Times waited on Mr. Macaulay, of Macaulay & Jarvis. It is well known that gentlemen do a very large business in lumber. They have extensive limits in the Roseau district and also in Keewauing. In answer to enquiries, Mr. Macaulay stated that his firm is selling lumber much lower than last year. He compared a Minnesota price-list of May, 1879, with one for the same month of 1878, and found the prices there higher for this year than last. Being requested, he furnished a list of his prices for lumber at the present time. They are given below, and for the purpose of comparison, they are tabulated with one of his firm's price-lists for 1878, so as to show the difference. The rates quoted are per M.:-

1st Common Boards, 12, 14, 16, 18 and 20 feet.....	\$28	25
Culls, Common Boards, 12, 14, 16, 18.....	20	20
Scantling, Joists and Timber, 20 feet and under.....	28	20
Stock boards, all widths.....	30	25
"    dressed one side.....	33	33
"    dressed two sides.....	35	32

It will be seen by a perusal of these figures that in no single case has the price increased; that only for clap-boards, and 2nd and 3rd clear, are the rates as high as last year, and that in every other case they are considerably cheaper."

\*The track has since been continued to the river side, and the station is a mile nearer the city.

shade trees being placed on either side, which would greatly beautify it. The stores are large and well appointed, and the public buildings of white brick, for which there is abundant clay in the vicinity, are handsome and substantial looking. City lots are selling at a very high price—as high as in the most flourishing towns of similar size in Ontario. That Winnipeg has a great future before it no one can doubt, and the enterprising men who cast their lot in at the first richly merit all the advantages that are certainly in store for them. I start to-morrow morning by steamer up the Assiniboine to Portage la Prairie, and thence for a ten days' drive across the plains towards the Rocky Mountains; and as postal facilities permit will continue to give the readers of the *Gazette* my "Chronicles by the Way."

#### LETTER IV.

THE INDIAN QUESTION—TRICKS UPON TRAVELLERS—UP THE ASSINIBOINE—THE HALF-BREED LANDS AND THEIR PROPRIETORSHIP—PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE—THE WHEAT FIELDS.

ON THE ASSINIBOINE,  
21st August, 1879. }

Journeys across the plains to the far west afford infinite amusement at times to those familiar with them at the expense of those who are making them for the first time. I heard some rather good stories which illustrate this. One of the parties that have recently gone west was in command of a young gentleman, who became very soon the butt of some practical joking. The danger of possible Indian troubles is not regarded at Winnipeg as very imminent, although all parties realize that in the event of the buffalo continuing to become more scarce, hunger may drive the Indians to excess and cause trouble. The question is one which, as I have said, though not regarded as of imminent concern, is, nevertheless, of sufficient interest, and in its possible consequences of sufficient moment to be the subject of general and constant conversation. The party referred to was starting for the plains, and a gentleman, an old resident of the North-West, and, therefore, an authority on the Indian question, meet-

ing the leader, referred to the danger of travel at this time, and to the Indian habit of scalping, remarking in a half joking way upon the fine opportunity his long hair would give for such an operation. The next day meeting Mr. — again, he observed that he had sacrificed his locks, had, in fact, submitted to the closest kind of velvet crop. "Hallo," said he, "what have you been doing with your head?" "Well you know," replied Mr. —, "I thought after what you told me about that scalping business, that as a precautionary measure I had better have my hair cut." The tormentor looked alarmed as he said, "Why, you've made things worse. If the Indians see such a head as that they'll be sure to tomahawk it."

I left Winnipeg last night, and am making the trip up the Assiniboine in the steamer *Marquette*. These steamers, built expressly for the navigation of these rivers, are all of the same pattern. Some, of course, are better fitted up than others, those on the Red River, between St. Vincent and Winnipeg, the Manitoba and the Minnesota, are the best in the matter of appointments; but the "*Marquette*" is a comfortable boat, drawing about two feet of water, and with the inevitable stern paddle wheel. She runs between Winnipeg and Portage La Prairie, a distance by land of sixty-five miles, and by water of about one hundred and thirty. The river is very winding—in some cases so much so that we sail due west and then due east within a few minutes interval. The banks are fringed with wood, and the action of the water has made them, as a general thing, perpendicular, showing a depth of fine alluvial soil which fully accounts for the wonderful productiveness of the country. There are stopping points along the route, and at these the steamer runs against the shore, one of the men jumps off, fastens the line to a tree, a plank is thrown out, and the passengers or freight are landed or taken aboard, as the case may be. It is a primitive method, which relieves the country from the expense of wharves and wharfingers, and it answers every purpose. Even at Winnipeg, there is no wharf where we took the steamer, although gangways of a more formidable kind than are used along the route span the distance between the steamer and the shore. The water is of a brown muddy colour, as dirty a looking stream as can well be imagined—the result of the washings of the soil on either side; and it is rapidly falling, so that the trips for this season must soon cease. But the water has been un-

usually high this year, so much so that the steamer has for the first time in its history gone as far as Fort Ellice, a distance from the Portage La Prairie of about a hundred and forty miles by land, but fully double that by water.

The land for the greater part of the way up towards the Portage, along the river banks, is in the hands of half breeds, and presents anything but a promising appearance as to the settlements. The ranches in which they live are very wretched looking places, and the groups of women and children that stand on the shore watching the steamer pass, wear an appearance of anything but thrift. They will not be long in possession of these magnificent lands. I have it upon very high authority that they will not sell. They seem anxious to retain possession of their farms. But although they decline to sell, they are quite willing to borrow money, at rates of interest which show that they have but crude notions of the value of money, and with a willingness to have it compounded which argues badly for their early instruction in the rules of arithmetic. "Of course," said my informant, with a knowing look, as if the discovery was an original one with him, which it is not, "the lands will soon be mine, and it is the same as if they sold it." Not quite. Having regard to the progress of the locality, it will be an undoubted advantage when a change of proprietorship takes place; but it is equally true that the advantage will be greatly lessened by the fact that the proprietorship is changed from that of thrifless people to that of grasping land speculators. It would be a great blessing if the half-breeds could be induced to sell at once to the British and Canadian farmers who are seeking homes in this Province.

Portage La Prairie is so called because it was in former years the portage for the Indians coming from Lake Manitoba to the Assiniboine on their way to the Hudson's Bay post at Fort Garry. The distance between the two waters is about fourteen miles. The country about it is pronounced to be the garden of the Province of Manitoba. It is chiefly settled by Ontario farmers, and when that is stated, it requires no other words to prove that it is favourably settled. We expect to reach the village this evening, and in my next letter I will give my impressions of it.

#### PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE, August 21.

The boat arrived at three o'clock, and we are fixed here for the night. The latter part of the journey up was tedious, for the reason that the water is low, and the boat was constantly getting aground. Fortunately getting aground in the river here is not a serious matter. You have heard of the story of the Mississippi boats which were constructed to draw so little water, that when the dew was heavy in the morning they crossed points of land so as to avoid the curves. That is not quite the condition of things on the Assiniboine, but the water is very shallow, when a steamer drawing but two feet gets constantly on the shoals. Getting off simply involves reversing the engine, driving the vessel stern foremost against one bank, and then by a forward movement circumventing the offending shoal. The first building that strikes the eye on nearing the landing is Mr. Custer's residence, a large comfortable dwelling house. He is a successful farmer, who has been here for many years, a brother of General Custer who was killed in the Indian war. The sheds of Mr. Spratt at the landing are large and commodious. The village of the Portage is about a mile from the landing. It is a growing place, with about twenty stores of one description and another. The farms in the vicinity are very fine; and some newly-cut wheat, still in the sheaf, gave evidence of how abundant the harvest has been. It is practically one long wheat field, I am told, across the Portage to Lake Manitoba. The pest of the farmer are the black birds. I saw a swarm—for no other word describes it—rise from the field of cut wheat, so thick that without any exaggeration they looked like the swarm of shad flies one sees in June. In the stream beside the road as we drove up, the wild ducks are abundant, and so tame that the rattle of the waggons did not disturb them. This place is a very paradise for sportsmen at this season of the year. We leave at four in the morning for our long buck-board journey of six hundred miles. It has been showery all to-day. We are hoping for fine weather during the coming ten days, which will probably be consumed in the journey over the plains to Carlton, our present destination.

## LETTER V.

THE START FOR THE PRAIRIES—LAND SPECULATORS—A SKEPTICAL MANITOBA—PERRYING THE WHITE-MUD RIVER—FOUR MILES THROUGH A SLOUGH—A PRETTY BAD PIECE OF ROAD.

PALESTINE, Ma., 22nd August, 1879.

We started for our journey across the plains this morning. As we left the portage, we presented a fine appearance. Mr. Gigot, an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company, started with us for the first part of the journey, and our party consisted of Mr. Gigot and Mr. B., in single-horse buggy, Mr. McKay (who is in command) and myself on a buckboard drawn by a pair of horses; an express waggon, drawn by a pair of mules, in which our baggage, tents, provisions, &c., are packed, a spare horse being attached by a rope round his neck to the mules, three more spare horses, tied together in the same way, and a third man on horse back in charge of the spare animals. It is necessary to take spare horses along, as they cannot be obtained on the way, and at each stopping new ones are hitched to the waggons, the others being rested by running along loose. Our outfit, thus, leaving out of account Mr. Gigot, who, as I have said, was only going a short distance, consisted of the buck-board, driven double, the express waggon, three men and five extra horses. If we had driven up St. James street as we left the portage, I have no doubt we would have created a greater sensation than the recent stupid run upon the City and District Savings Bank. Mackay, who is our guide, philosopher and friend as far as Fort Ellice, is a young man of about twenty years of age, who has already seen much of the Northwest country, his forefathers being engaged in the H. B. Co's service, and he having spent some seven or eight years in the Far West, towards the Rocky Mountains. He is, although still young, thoroughly familiar with what in some cases, as will appear further on, are the almost trackless thoroughfares of this immense country. He is active and intelligent, and adds to his other qualifications that of being a good camp cook. The usual mode of travel to Fort Ellice is south of that taken by us, crossing at Rapid City, and if our object had been to avoid bad roads, we would have been wise to have taken the better known and better beaten path. There is a constant passage of

carts, with goods or passengers traversing it, while, judging by the experience of to-day, none go or come by the northern road. Last night I visited a freighter's camp at the portage. There were about twenty Red River carts in it, eight of which, drawn by oxen and in charge of two men, were to start early this morning for Carlton. These freighters do the work of transportation, which I hope will soon be done by the railway, through this country.

We passed over a fine piece of prairie country on our way across the portage towards Lake Manitoba. For the first seven or eight miles of the line which we took, a little west of the shortest line between the Assiniboine and Lake Manitoba, are magnificent fields of wheat, some of it partly cut, and giving indication of an abundant yield. Mackay, who was driving me, and who is familiar with all parts of the Province, says the average yield this year is expected to be, and so far as can be judged from what is cut and threshed, will be from twenty-eight to thirty bushels to the acre. In Minnesota, so far as I could learn, the average is not now expected to be more than about one-third of that. Passing from these fields the land is uncultivated, an evidence of what is certain to prove an injury to Manitoba, the fact that much of the best lands have got into the hands of speculators. It is said that one rather prominent gentleman in Montreal, who has recently become almost equally well known in the West, has secured some twenty sections, which are remaining uncultivated and unsold, waiting for the time when the industry and thrift of the settlers will render them valuable. If ever a plea could be made for partial confiscation, it would be in the case of those who have been purchasing land scrip for a song, and locating lands, holding them unimproved for speculative purposes. When the original holder of the scrip or the purchaser of it, has become a *bona fide* settler, his rights should be scrupulously respected, wherever his land is situated. His presence as a settler is of infinitely more importance to the country than any possible price that the Government could obtain for the lands. But it would be a great blessing if the claims of the speculators were only recognized to the extent of the money they had paid for their scrip, with a liberal interest of, say, ten per cent.

We intended to camp for breakfast at Rat Creek, but when we reached that point we resolved to go on to Mr. Shannon's, a well-known farmer, who is devoting himself

largely to cattle farming. As we approached his place, which is situated on White Mud River, we had evidence of how successful he was in raising good cattle from the number of very fine animals, in splendid condition, which we saw grazing. We drove up near his house, and while the men were lighting the camp fires to get breakfast ready, we had a chat with the proprietor, who was taking in hay—he standing on the top of an enormous stack of about fifty yards long, and a neighbor pitching the hay to him from the hay-cart which had just come from the field. There is no better way of getting at the opinion of the people, no better way of understanding the interests of the country, as viewed from the standpoint of those who live in it, than from conversations with the settlers; and I cannot better convey to my readers the local view of Northwest interests than by reporting such conversations. As I have said, Mr. Shannon was standing on an enormous hay stack, receiving and placing the hay as it was pitched to him, and the conversation was at intervals of the operation. Having, to use a familiar phrase, bid him the time of day, we enquired.

"How long have you been in this country, Mr. Shannon?"

"About nine years. I came in before the Government," that apparently being the event from which all other events are dated.

"Did you come from Ontario?"

"No, I came from British Columbia."

"Do you like this country as well as British Columbia?"

"Oh no; this is not such a pretty country as British Columbia. It's a good agricultural country, but a man can do better in British Columbia."

"Why did you not stop there, then?"

"I was going back, but the Indians robbed me of all I had, and I was obliged to settle here."

"Why don't you like this country; you can raise larger crops?"

"Oh, yes; but what's the use of crops when I can't sell them. Ask Mr. Gigot there, and he'll tell you. If you take a load of wheat to the Portage, they will hardly give you store pay for it. They might give you some dry goods, but not a bit of groceries."

"Well, but you'll have the railway soon, and that'll give a market."

"That's live horse and you'll get grass. They've been talking about the railway for

the last seven years, and we're no nearer it than we were then."

"Well, but things have changed, and you'll have the railway at the Portage next year."

"Look here," said Shannon, leaning for a moment in an attitude of defiance upon his hay fork, "I'll bet you a horse we won't have it next year, nor the next."

"Well, they are going to begin it at once this season."

"An what good'll that do us? Sure the Pembina branch was commenced six years ago, and it is not quite finished yet. I tell you the trouble with the farmers here is that they are being humbugged with promises. If you would tell them honestly that they are not going to get the railway it would be a great deal better; they would not be disappointed then. But the members of Parliament and politicians tell them all kinds of stories about the railway, until they are getting heart sick with the disappointment."

"Well I'm not a member of Parliament or a politician, and I tell you the railway will be built to the Portage next year."

"Oh, sure if you are not a politician, you can't know anything about it."

"Well here's my friend who is a politician and a member of Parliament, and he'll tell you the same thing."

"Sure I would not believe him at all."

We enjoyed a hearty laugh at this sally. It did seem hard that a man who was not a politician was no authority, because he could not have knowledge, and a man who was politician was not to be believed because he was one. We went on with our morning meal, for the latter part of this conversation, the salient points of which alone I report, had occurred whilst that interesting operation was going on, and Mr. Shannon, attracted by the approach of another load of hay, resumed his commanding position on the top of the rick. Presently he returned with—

"Look here now, what will you give me for the place—three hundred and twenty acres?"

The question led to a conversation on the value of the place, for which he was willing to take the cost of improvements—all the more willing, I am inclined to think, because we were not at all likely purchasers, which he put at three thousand dollars. He complained of the new land regulations on the ground that eighty acres was of no use to a farmer in that country, and especially on the

ground that they would retard settlement, because the terms were less favourable than those given in Dakota, where, he said, many were settling who otherwise would have come here.

"You're going in for cattle raising" we enquired of him. "How many head of cattle have you?"

"About eighty, and some sixteen or twenty horses. I am only just beginning, and have not done much yet."

"How many did you sell last year?"

"Not a great many."

"About two thousand dollars worth?"

"Yes, about that."

"And you're only beginning."

"That's all."

And that certainly did not seem a very bad beginning. Mr. Shannon is something of a wag, and likes to play tricks on travellers. But he is an energetic, quick-witted, intelligent man, with an experience in British Columbia and California before he settled in Manitoba, which has given him a spirit of self-reliance. He talks like a dissatisfied man, but he is not. His idea of doing well is earning fifty or sixty dollars a day, which he claims to have done in the gold diggings. But the farmer who can sell two thousand dollars worth of cattle a year, just at the commencement of his stock raising, can pay three hundred dollars a year for the education of his children at the schools in St. Boniface, and can call three hundred and twenty acres of magnificent land his own, is not in a bad way. It is a pity on all accounts that there is so much solid reason, arguing from the past, for his scepticism on the subject of the railway. I find the same anxiety for the progress of the work, and the same doubt as to when it will go on, everywhere; but this is a branch of the subject that must be treated of by itself.

Bidding Mr. Shannon good-day, and parting company with Mr. Gigot, who came no further, we started for Westbourne and Palestine. Fairly on the road, the spare horses were allowed to run loose, two of the men rode, another had charge of the waggon, and Mr. B and myself took possession of the buck-board, and in this order we are on our way for Fort Ellice, where we change men and horses for the further journey to Carlton House, about three hundred and fifty miles farther on. The White Mud River is so called from the fact that the land is somewhat lighter, farmers say even better, than the black loam of the Red River region. We crossed it at Westbourne, an embryo city,

to the vicinity of which St. Francois Xavier street has contributed a farmer in the person of Mr. Rhind. I did not happen to meet him, and have therefore no knowledge of how he is getting on in his new vocation. The river is crossed by a ferry, one of the most primitive description, consisting of two narrow scows, with planks placed cross-ways upon them. A rope stretched across the river, attached by pulleys to each end of the ferry boat and worked by a small boy, completed the arrangement. It was on the other side when we reached the bank, and while waiting for it to come over we had a chat with a couple of farmers. One was a son of the late T. H. Evans, of Montreal, who appeared to recognize that we were from that city. He came up in connection with the Pacific Railway survey, and the work being done, instead of going back to wait for something to turn up, as too many have done, he made up his mind to strike out for independence by taking up land and settling upon it. He likes the country, and is hopeful of its progress. The other was an elderly man, who has also taken up land. He enquired about the new "land-lock," as he says they call it, and appeared impressed with the idea that it was going to stop immigration. But he believed that a hundred and sixty a res was enough for any man, and in this he probably struck the key note of the reason which has prompted the policy of the Government. While our chat was going on, the ferry barge was in readiness. The horses being unhitched, the waggon and buck-board were taken across separately, there being only room enough for one at a time. The horses were driven into the stream, and made to ford across, the water being so deep that in the centre it came over their backs. The scow was a shaky looking affair, and we learned afterwards how fortunate we had been, as it sank with the mail carrier a little after we had crossed. I should, however, beg its pardon for my reflections upon it, on the principle that we must not abuse the bridge that carried us over.

A drive of eight or ten miles brought us to a pretty spot, on the bank of the same river, where we stopped for dinner and rest for the horses, and in a couple of hours started for this place. We had to cross the river again this time on a better scow, at a point where the settlers are making a bridge. The men at work remarked to us, in answer to our enquiry as to the condition of the roads, that for the first four miles they were "pretty bad." "Pretty bad," as we learned from ex-

perience, is a polite form of a much more forcible statement. We had scarcely left the ferry when the trail seemed to disappear. As far as we could see was long grass, with, to the unpractised eye, not even a sign to show how the road went. Our guides, however, are skilful men; Mackay, on horseback, having surveyed the ground, led the way and we advanced. We soon found ourselves driving through water, the grass through which we passed being higher than the horses, high enough, without exaggeration, to, at times, conceal absolutely from view the spare horses which were running loose. The bottom was black mud, and a smell prevailed, as the result of our disturbing it with the wheels of the buck-board, which was not at all like either Florida water or Eau de Cologne. We were in fact, in what was known as a sleugh. The waggon, with the baggage, went first, we keeping up close behind, when suddenly the mules in front apparently made a deeper plunge than usual. "Whoa, get up there," shouted the driver, and the poor mules plunged as if for dear life. Presently the smaller one seemed almost to disappear, and in the effort to extricate itself, broke the whippetree. Here was a situation! but the men were equal to it. Mackay encouraged us to "gee" a little to one side, and to make the crossing of this, the worst spot. We did so, and after a desperate pull got through safely. Then the active young fellow dismounted his horse, and, up to his waist in water, fished out an extra whippetree from the waggon, and proceeded to fix it. We went on for some distance in the hope of getting out of the almost intolerable stench, but the risk of missing the track inclined us to halt. It seemed a terribly long time, and night was approaching. We could hear the men talking, and presently the voice of Mackay pressing the animals on. The heads of the mules alone were visible from our standpoint, and their bobbing up and down showed that they were making efforts to get on.

Finally the "go on," and "get up," "get up," came more loudly and rapidly, and the animals had pulled the waggon out. That was simply an exceptionally bad spot of the four-mile sleugh, over the whole of which we had to drive through water and long grass, giving us a realization of what our friends at the ferry described as a "pretty bad piece of road." It is the more remarkable that so inexpressive a term should have been used, as the roads generally were really good. These sleughs, however, are simply swamps. They are not musk-egg, of which

we have all heard so much; and when reclaimed, as they can be, just as the St. Clair Flats were reclaimed, in spite of wise opinions to the effect that the thing was impossible, they will be valuable lands. The detention in getting through the sleugh made it dark when we halted at this point and put up our tent for the night. We have made only forty miles from the Portage, about fifteen miles less than we hoped to make when we set out this morning. A cup of tea—Hudson's Bay Company's black tea, a fine article, and a biscuit, has answered for supper, and we retire for our first night of tenting it on the prairies. Good-night.

## LETTER VI.

TENTING IT ON THE PRAIRIE—SETTLERS' EXPERIENCE—WHAT CAN BE DONE IN THE NORTHWEST—CONDITIONS OF SETTLEMENT—CROSSING THE LITTLE SASKATCHEWAN—THE MOUNTED POLICE—THUNDER STORM ON THE PLAINS.

FORT ELLICE, N. W. T., 25 Aug, 1879.

I closed my last letter just as we retired for our first night of camp life on the prairies. We were up at four o'clock, that being the orthodox camping hour for rising, having had a good night's sleep. To be sure some horses, belonging to the neighborhood, insisted on grazing uncomfortably close to our tent, at times pawing it as if asking admission. But this is evidently the custom of the country, and we did not mind it. It is true that there might have been an inconvenient result if the horse's leg had come through. It didn't, and there is no use in speculating upon disagreeable probabilities. A cup of tea, to prepare us for the start, was all we took, resolving that if compelled to rise at prairie hours, we should at least breakfast at an aristocratic city hour; and we started for the day's journey, contemplating getting a few miles beyond the Little Saskatchewan. It was a pleasant morning drive, as we were guarded with the mosquito nets, from the absence of which we had suffered, in addition to our other troubles, in the sleugh the day before. The country continues good, the soil somewhat lighter, but certainly not inferior to that of the richest lands in Manitoba. Six miles brought us to the boundary of the Province, and we entered upon that almost



limitless region known as the Northwest Territory, and were under the jurisdiction of Governor Laird and the Mounted Police. A three hours' drive gave us a good appetite for breakfast, and we punished a lot of bacon and eggs. After breakfast we proceeded onward, and presently came upon a new settlement, and as the owner was at the roadside we stopped for a chat with him. His experience was both interesting and encouraging, and I give it. He came up this spring, and had already broken a lot of ground, which will be ready for wheat next spring; had erected a house and outhouse; had fenced in a garden, in which were potatoes and other vegetables, more than sufficient for the use of his family for the year, and was busy preparing more land for grain, having got in a couple of large stacks of hay for the use of his cattle in winter. He is a Devonshire man, who came out to this country about six years ago, and has been working about the neighborhood of Stratford as a farm laborer until this spring, when he resolved to take a homestead of a hundred and sixty acres and strike out for himself, and he has already succeeded as I have described. His actual outlay in cash, exclusive of course of his oxen, his cow and his implements—that is for bringing himself, his wife and one child up here, and his expenses in settling on the land, has, according to his statement, not exceeded one hundred dollars. He is in great hopes of his own future and of that of the country where he has settled, the farms about him being all taken up. It is proper to say that he is one of those men who believes, as he put it himself, that a man can get on anywhere if he is sober, industrious and careful. He had saved ten pounds a year as a farm servant in England. So that these conditions should be remembered by those who wish to parallel his experience. But it is one which may be paralleled by any man on the same terms, and it is an illustration of how great a blessing the opening-up of this country must be to hundreds of thousands of people, who will each year seek in it new fields of enterprise and industry. Nothing of special moment occurred to us during the day, except the rather remarkable fact of our meeting an old *attache* of the *Gazette*, who is travelling through the country in the interest of your neighbor the *Witness*. He was travelling single, on horse-back, with his provisions strung saddle-bag fashion, and was on his return to Winnipeg. It was late when we reached the Little Saskatchewan, so that we could

not cross that night. A slight shower of rain, the last end of what had evidently been a severe thunder storm to the south-east, gave us but little inconvenience, although it, perhaps, retarded us somewhat. We camped for the night on the banks of the river, at a place called Tanner's. There were some other camps there, and we learned from a man, formerly from Brantford, now settled here, that it was a favorite place for camping for the settlers that have come on this year. He says as many as a hundred a day have crossed at this point, and in his boarding house, for he has converted his log house into a boarding house, as many as twenty-five have stopped over night. This is an illustration of the extent to which immigration, now about over for the season, has been going on this year. Our informant is not very anxious about the railway immediately, and in this respect he is an exception to every one I have met. His argument is that the settlers who are in now will have an abundant local market for their produce, through the immigration that is coming in, and he has undoubted confidence, notwithstanding the new regulations, that this will be very large. He says Mr. Tanner, a farmer in the neighborhood, got this year as much as two dollars a bushel for the wheat he had raised, paid him by new settlers coming in. All the settlers now in depend largely upon the wants of the new comers to supply them with a local market. It will only, however, be for one year, for the conditions of settlement are exceptionally favorable. A man coming in in the spring, breaks up the prairie by putting a plough through it. It remains thus for about three months, subject to the action of the atmosphere, and is then turned over again, and is thus ready for crop in the spring. Meanwhile he finds abundant food for his cattle, and in the prairie hay, which is ready at his hand, plenty of fodder for them through the winter, for the mere cutting and hauling of it. For food he has the inexhaustible supplies of fish and game, which with "a small dog and a scattering gun" he can take at command. If better conditions for settlers can be found anywhere, I am ignorant of the fact.

We ignored the evident hint of our friend, that his boarding-house was at our service for the consideration of a small sum of current coin of the realm, and camped out. In the morning we prepared to cross the river. There are two ways of doing this, one by a raft made of alight logs strapped together,

which is dignified by the name of ferry, and the other by fording the river, which is about a hundred feet wide, and three feet deep at this point. The first involved unloading, and taking the waggons, baggage, and horses over in detachments, and a consequent labor and delay, so we chose the latter. The buckboard was given in charge of Mackay, and Mr. B. and myself mounted on top of the load on the waggon, and held on firmly by the straps, which bound down the tarpaulin covering, and thus we got across. The water was deeper than we thought. It came into the box of the waggon, but fortunately did little damage. Our appearance crossing must have been most artistic, and there seemed but one thing necessary to make us absolutely happy, the presence of a photographer, to render historical the incident.

Reaching the top of the hills on the other side of the river, we came upon the plains west of the Little Saskatchewan, and the sight was a magnificent one. An immense expanse of beautiful rolling land, with here and there a tuft of trees to relieve the eye, and small lakelets, like artificial ponds, studded at intervals, made a picture which cannot be described, but which can never be forgotten. The nearest approach to description that I can think of is to liken it to a highly cultivated country at harvest time, with some fields of grain still standing, and others cut, the different shades of color of the prairie hay giving that impression. The settlements are tolerably numerous, the land all the way up to Shoal Lake being pretty well taken up. Coming across we took for a moment the wrong trail, which made us diverge, causing us to come upon Captain Herkimer of the Mounted Police, who was driving with Mrs. Herkimer; and a couple of mounted policemen in uniform with a servant in another waggon. According to custom, Capt. Herkimer disembarked to enquire if we had any spirits, and if so whether we had a permit from the Lieutenant-Governor. Without the latter, the spirits, if any, are forfeited. A mutual recognition having taken place, we were invited to stop for the night, or at any rate for dinner, at the Mounted Police quarters at Shoal Lake, an invitation which, as subsequently turned out, we had reason to regard as Providential. We camped for dinner at the junction of the southern road through Rapid City and that which we had taken, and after dinner started on our journey. The morning had been a beautiful one,

and we had been congratulating ourselves that the weather, which had been cloudy and unpromising, was settled at last. Alas for human expectations! In a little while the clouds began to gather, the lightning to play, and the thunder to roll; large drops of rain, the size of your thumb nail, came down, and then it seemed once more to brighten up. It was a mere temporary brightening. The clouds gathered around us again, and for an hour we had a rain storm, with accompaniments of thunder and lightning, such as I have never seen. It was like everything else in the Northwest, on a grand scale. We reached the hospitable quarters of Capt. Herkimer just as it was over, but a comfortable shelter with a chance of getting on a change of clothing, was a luxury indeed; for camping out, however charming, is not the most inviting thing on such a night as last night was. I have to close to catch the men who are returning to the Portage, as mail communication is by no means frequent in this region. I will continue my chronicles, but when they will reach you I am unable to say.

## LETTER VII.

THE INDIAN TROUBLE—NORTHWEST NOMENCLATURE—THE ASSEMBLY—FORT ELlice—THE STAFF WESTWARD—TRAVELLING ON THE PLAINS—ROBBERING HORSES.

ON THE PLAINS, N. W. T., 26 Aug., 1879.

My last letter, dated from Fort Ellice, yesterday, left me comfortably housed, after the severe thunder storm, in the hospitable quarters of Capt. Herkimer, of the Northwest Mounted Police, on the shores of Shoal Lake. There are at this point seventeen men of the force, the barracks having been built to accommodate twenty-four. Here we learned for the first time the particulars of the so-called Indian trouble at Fort Ellice, which had in its travels already at Winnipeg reached the proportions of an Indian *emute*, and I dare say by the time it got to Ottawa will have become a general Indian uprising. The facts of the case, as I learned them, were that the Indians, having congregated for their pay under the treaty, had taken four cows, Government property, and killed them. They are entitled to be fed while waiting for

"the treaty," as it is familiarly called, and it appears that they looked upon these cattle as those for their use, and the taking of them in advance, therefore, as a not very serious offence. The Indians who took them were arrested and arraigned before Capt Herkimer, who is a Justice of the Peace, and admitted to bail, that being considered the most prudent course to pursue under the circumstances. The Indians have all taken their treaty at the Fort, and have nearly all left for their reserves; so that no serious consequences followed the incident. It should be stated that the price of the cattle was deducted from the treaty money, and the Indians were given to understand that while rations are to be served out to them on these occasions, they must not venture to forcibly take anything.

The Indians in this neighborhood are chiefly Santeux and Swampy Indians. The few teepees or huts remaining, gave us a chance of seeing them. Some of them were rather elaborately ornamented, with faces painted with red ochre, and chains of beads or gilt metal hanging from their ears. Most of them can read, and at the Fort was a Presbyterian minister, a full blooded Indian, who could not speak a word of English. Some of their habits are peculiar. Their method of exhibiting their bravery, while evidence of great powers of physical endurance, seems unnecessarily harsh. I heard of one case, a warrior, who subjected himself to three days without eating, and then piercing a hole through the fleshy part of his breast, put a string through it, and hung himself up. It appears almost incredible that he could do this, but the statement came to me well authenticated. Their manner of mourning is also remarkable. They lacerate the face and arms and breasts with sharp instruments, generally flint stones, so that the blood pours from them. During the present "treaty" one old squaw literally cut the flesh of her arms from shoulder to wrist, in token of her grief for the death of a grandchild. The Indian question gives rise to a great deal of discussion, and will undoubtedly require very careful handling; but I will, when I get further on and have acquired more information, deal with it specially.

The drive from Shoal Lake to Fort Ellice is a delightful one, through a magnificent country which is already beginning to be settled. About twenty miles from the Lake we come upon the Bird Tail Creek. The scenery is simply charming. The creek runs

through a valley, the slopes on either side presenting the appearance of cultivated fields. Already some settlers have built their houses and are breaking up ground for next year's operations. They are to be envied on the site they have selected; indeed, the whole valley is destined to be, within a very short period, covered with cultivated fields and pleasant homesteads. The nomenclature of the North-west is peculiar in its origin. Bird Tail creek, for instance, obtained its name in this way:—Many years ago the grandfather of our guide, McKay, travelling through the country with his son, then a little boy, shot a bird of rare plumage, having a beautiful tail, which the boy was carefully preserving. In crossing this creek, really a small river, they were upset, and their baggage carried off in the stream. On reaching the shore, the first thing the boy asked for was his bird's tail, and from this incident the stream came to be known as the Bird Tail Creek. Nearly all the other names are of similarly simple origin.

A drive of about eighteen miles from Bird Tail brought us to the banks of the Assiniboine, opposite Fort Ellice, and a grander view than that which burst upon us, I have never seen. The banks on either side are steep and precipitous, on the one side two hundred and ten feet, and on the other two hundred and fifteen feet high, with a winding road leading down to the valley, which is three-quarters of a mile wide and through which the river winds like a snake, the curvature so sharp, that it almost traverses the valley at right angles, backwards and forwards, in the form given to muslin by a crimping iron, if so familiar an illustration may be used to describe so sublime a picture. We halted on the top of the hill to take in the view, which sketched on either side as far as the eye could reach. The sun, shining brightly on the water, gave it the appearance of a silver thread plaited through the valley below. I have never longed for the descriptive power as I did in gazing upon this magnificent picture; but no word-painting could do it justice. We crossed the river by a bridge, two hundred feet long, erected by the Hudson's Bay Company, and then ascended to the Fort, which is situated on the hill on the south side of the river. As we approached, the flag of the Company—the Union Jack, with the letters H. B. C. on the sheet—was run up. We reached the Fort at about four o'clock in the afternoon, and put up for the night. Fort Ellice is admirably situated in the centre of

a very fine agricultural country, and is destined to be an important commercial centre. It wants a flouring mill, a want which will probably soon be supplied, and then it will, owing to the rapidity with which settlement is being made, become very soon the centre of an important trade. It will probably be the objective point of the second section of the railway, now that the Government have resolved to adopt the sensible plan of building the line through that portion of the country that is suitable for settlement; and the proper thing to do would be to advertise at once for tenders, so that the line could be carried thus far within the next three years. If this is done, I venture the prediction that the road when opened, worked carefully and economically, will be not only self-sustaining, but will be a source of revenue and profit to the Dominion.

This morning we started for our journey onward. If our escort was imposing leaving the Portage, it was still more so on leaving Fort Ellice. We had eleven horses, including two mules, if you will pardon the bull, and they are all fine animals, in apparently excellent condition. One of the mules was branded U. S., and thus bespoke his origin. He was one of those taken by the Indians from General Custer on the occasion of the successful Indian attack upon the United States troops, in which the American General was killed. We were in charge of a half-breed, Johnny Brass, an employee of the Company, who is a famous guide, being equally good as driver or cook. He had as assistants another young half-breed, and an Indian boy of the Sauteux tribe, a fine strapping fellow of about eighteen years of age, with a good-natured, handsome face. He was got up for the occasion. His black felt hat had on it streamers of blue and red narrow ribbon, which floated imposingly in the breeze. A black frock-coat with hood and large brass buttons, a clean checked cotton shirt, which he wore outside of his pataoons, leggings elaborately worked in beads, and a pouch, similarly worked, in which he carried his pipe and tobacco. He rode on horseback, his special duty being to look after the spare animals, and he had a long rope, probably twenty feet long, with a leather whip lash at the end of it, trailing on the ground beside him, which he used with wonderful skill to keep the horses in line. The loose horses, under charge of the Indian boy, first, Johnny Brass and his companion with the provision waggon, next, and we bringing up the rear, was the order in which we set out; and the

start, I assure you, was a most imposing one. We descended into the Valley of the Assiniboine, moved up on the west side, and crossed the Qu'Appelle, near the confluence of the two rivers, and after a drive of eighteen miles, halted for breakfast. The horses were unharnessed, and sent off to feed upon the prairie grass, that being the only food they get. Canadian horses brought into the country, cannot for the first year get on in this way—they invariably break down, unless they are fed with oats as well. But the half-breed horses, as these are, thrive well upon it. To cut some wood, get a fire, cook our bacon and eggs, eat our breakfast, and repack the provision waggon, is the work of about an hour and a quarter, and then the horses have to be caught, or at least those which are to do the hauling for the next stage. This is a most exciting operation. This morning the horses had strayed off about half a mile, and were stretched along, perhaps, a similar distance, making thus a long line. The three men, each with a lasso and carrying a bridle, started for their work, one going to either end of the line, and the third getting behind it. It was a case of surrounding the animals, and, strange as it may appear, they succeeded, bringing the horses together in a group. Then came the exciting moment. The men would approach the horse they wanted, in a crouching attitude, holding the bridle behind them, and just as they appeared to have him, the animal would bound off; then came a chase to head him back; as he approached the man, the lasso was thrown, and if it proved a good throw the animal was caught. Sometimes the men succeeded in putting their hand upon the horse, and the moment they did, the animal was secure, the bridle put on, and then he was left and chase was made for another. The remarkable thing is the moment the horse is bridled he is under subjection, never attempts to go off, but stands unmoved, looking at the operation of catching his fellows. It is, in fact, like a child's game of tag, in which the horses seem to heartily enjoy the sport, and in which the moment one of them is touched, he gives up all further resistance, and submits meekly to the duty before him. The horses were fresh this morning, and it took nearly three quarters of an hour to catch the five required for the waggons and the Indian boy.

Our next point of interest was the Big Cut Arm Creek, about thirty miles from Fort Ellice. On the road we met the first indication of an aid to travellers over the plains, in the index post, erected by the Mounted Police,

at a point where the trails diverge, and upon which were boards with the letters 'To Pelly' and 'To Battleford.' The scenery about the Big Cut Arm Creek is similar to that about the Bird Tail Creek. The country from Fort Ellice is a light sandy loam, inferior to that over which we had been passing, but yet giving indications of being good agricultural land; certainly very good in any other country than this, where the comparison with the rich alluvial soil of Manitoba, and the country east of Fort Ellice, makes even fair average land look inferior. On the west side of the creek, we came again on the rich rolling lands, a decided improvement upon that through which we had just passed. Another twenty-three miles brought us to a pleasant camping ground, where we put up for the night. In order to prevent the horses from going too far during the night, for such a thing as tying them is unheard of, they are hobbled, an operation which is performed by tying the two fore feet together. Their movement, thus hobbled, is a very curious one. They look like rocking horses in full motion, or on close inspection, like men running a sack race. The tent pitched, supper eaten and to bed, finishes our first day of travel west of Fort Ellice. It has been a delightful day, and our progress most enjoyable, and we turn in with the hope of a long day's journey to-morrow. Good-night.

### LETTER VIII.

ON TO TOUCHWOOD—INCIDENTS BY THE WAY—  
THE INDIAN PAYMENTS—THEY ARE ANXIOUS  
TO SEE THE FARM-INSTRUCTORS—CHARACTER  
OF THE COUNTRY.

TOUCHWOOD HILLS, 28th August, 1879.

At five o'clock yesterday morning we struck camp and started for this point, the next in special interest on our journey. The horses were not so difficult to catch as on the previous morning, a fact which was accounted for in two ways: they were further from the starting point, and had less disposition to go back; and the day's travel had evidently impressed them with the idea that they had responsibilities before them which they might as well submit to. We had still, however, the same game of horse tag, the same submission the very moment they were touched, the

same meek standing still, amid surrounding galloping and excitement, when the bridles were put upon them. Fourteen miles brought us to the borders of what is known as the long plain, and we halted for breakfast, earlier than usual, because we were entering upon a stretch where wood could not be obtained, even the small quantity required for camp cooking purposes. We passed the mail for Winnipeg, an event in this country, seeing that it passes each way but once in three weeks. The driver told us he had been eleven days coming from Battleford and seven from Carlton. "Do you hear any news about the Indians?" we asked, that being at the moment the question of greatest interest. His reply was that everything was quiet, so far as he had heard. The Indians at Carlton, he had heard had refused to take the cheques and the money for their payment had not arrived. We had already learned, however, to receive with some caution the stories about the Indians, and we went on, hoping that this one, like some others which we had heard, was exaggerated, if not utterly untrue. "The plain" presents a rolling appearance, resembling very much the surface of the ocean when the long swell which succeeds a storm is upon it. The land is a light sandy loam, with occasional drifts of gravel, but, on the whole, is fair land for farming purposes. The eye is unrelieved by anything in the shape of wood, beyond here and there tufts of brush poplar. The mosquitoes were unusually troublesome. We had been told that they were gone, and comparatively speaking, from what we hear of their unusual numbers this year in the month of July, for instance, this statement was perhaps true. But their presence in large numbers was painfully evident to us. They are monsters in size, and their force of penetration reminded one of the story of the weary traveller at Prince Arthur's Landing, who sought protection from mosquitoes by getting under a large sugar boiler. The enemy, however, penetrated the iron, and he then amused himself by clinching them on the inside, when, to his horror, they carried off the boiler and left him unprotected. That story is, I fear, apocryphal, but it is told as a forcible illustration of the power of these pests in some parts of the country.

We passed about eighteen miles through the plain before halting for dinner, over a country which had become monotonous by its sameness. On our way we overtook some set-

tlers going into the country, and another evidence of a phase of civilization we saw in a playing card, the six of clubs, lying upon the road side. One swallow does not make spring, nor does one card make a pack; but its presence at least indicated that travellers or freighters had whiled away the time with a game of euchre or of seven-up. We camped forty miles from this point, and after a good night's rest we started early this morning, a drizzling rain prevailing—a Scotch mist which proverbially will wet any Irishman to the skin. We passed a camp of freighters, twenty-seven carts, going in with loads, among which were a number of agricultural implements. The country steadily improved as we approached the hills. The small lakes, which are characteristic of the country, prevail largely, and game, chiefly wild geese and ducks, are very plentiful. As we approached the hills, we met with a slight accident, which, but for the admirable provision to meet contingencies which had been made, might have proved inconvenient. Going through a sleugh, which proved to be deeper than we anticipated, the horses, in their efforts to draw the buckboard through, broke the cross-bar, and left us sitting in anything but a pleasant predicament. A spare bar happened to be among our luggage in the wagon, and as Johnny Brass is as skillful at repairing a break as he is at cooking a breakfast of bacon and eggs, we were soon ready for the road again, the detention not exceeding about half an hour.

We reached the post of the Hudson's Bay Company, at this point at two o'clock, and found that the work of paying the Indians their "treaty" had just concluded. There are a number of teepees or lodges still left, and we learned something of the difficulties which exist, and of the grievances of which the Indians complain. There were rumours of trouble in the payments at Qu'Appelle, and the Indians here had waited some time, some of them were still waiting, to ascertain what their friends there were doing. Among the things which they demanded was that they should be paid twelve dollars instead of five, which is the amount named in the treaty; and they based their claim upon the fact that they were paid the larger sum the first year. It appears, from the explanations I heard, that the first year a present of twelve dollars each was given to them, simply as a present on the signing of the treaty, and not as an earnest of future similar payments, which it was distinctly understood would not

be made except as provided by the terms of the treaty. The Indians, however, always have a parley before taking their treaty; always have new requests to make, or complaints of conditions unfulfilled to offer, and then end by taking their money and provisions and going home happy. They are anxiously looking for the farm instructors, and complain that they were not sent earlier, so that they might be in a position to earn a livelihood for themselves and their families by tilling the soil, now that their old resort, the buffalo, is disappearing. The opinion of the Hudson's Bay officer at this point, who has had a long experience and understands the Indians well, is that they will take to farming, and although it is not likely that they will become successful tillers of the soil, taking English farmers as the type, they will learn to raise enough for the wants of their families, with something to spare for the market. It is at least an encouraging sign to find them anxiously waiting the arrival of the instructors, and more than willing to profit by any teaching they may impart to them.

The Touchwood hills are destined to be the site of a good settlement. As yet no English or Canadian settlers have located, but in the vicinity of the Church of England Mission, under the care of the Rev. Mr. Reeder, some eighteen families of half-breeds and Indians have settled, and are successfully farming, raising good crops of wheat, barley, potatoes, &c. The Mission is about fifteen miles from the Company's post, and the land about it is said to be very fertile, producing most excellent wheat. Some settlements, by half-breeds from Manitoba, have already been commenced in the immediate vicinity of the post, but much has not yet been done. Among the indications, however, that settlement is certain soon to take place, is the fact that a store is about being started about six miles from the post, by a trader, in competition with the Company's establishment. It will not be a very large affair, but such as it is, it is the precursor of settlers. Our last stage, in reaching this point, was over a steadily improving country, with abundance of water, and of small poplars; and game of every description, duck, prairie chicken, plover, and snipe, was most plentiful. Up to this time our observation has led to the conclusion that wherever game abounds the land is good.

One of our mules and a couple of the horses having given indication of breaking.

down, we obtained four fresh horses at Touchwood. There are a great many kept at this point, and as an evidence of the ease with which they are kept, I may state that they are not housed in winter, being turned adrift to graze upon the grass, where the snow hardly covers it. One man can take charge of a hundred or a hundred and fifty horses in the winter; and they come into the post in the spring in very good condition. Cattle, however, have to be housed during the winter, and fed upon the wild hay, abundance of which can be obtained each fall for the cutting and stacking. We start this evening on our way to Carlton, a distance of about one hundred and sixty miles, proposing to make a short stage through the hills before camping.

### LETTER IX.

THE GREAT SALT PLAIN—A WET DRIVE AND TEST-  
ING—SETTLER FOR EDMONTON—THE TELE-  
GRAPH STATION—HEROIC WOMEN—CRIMSON  
LAKE—CROSSING THE SOUTH SASKATCHEWAN  
—DUCK LAKE—AN ECCENTRIC INDIAN CHIEF  
—ARRIVAL AT FORT CARLTON.

FORT CARLTON,  
1st September, 1879. }

We made sixteen miles after leaving Touchwood Hills post before camping, passing on our way the camp of the first of the farming instructors, Mr. Scott, that we have come across. He is to be stationed at the Touchwood Hill reserve, and will commence his work immediately. We also passed a train of thirty-one carts with agricultural implements and supplies for the Indians. The country is rolling, tolerably well wooded, and giving indications of being a good track for farming. Touchwood hills, indicated on the map as mountains, are really not hills to the traveller, and but for the fact that they are so called, we should hardly have perceived the difference, except that they are better wooded than the prairie or plains.

On Friday morning we started on our trip, and, after a few miles' drive, entered upon the great salt plain, as it is called. The morning was a dull heavy one, with showers of rain prevailing, and the flies, before we left the woods, were very troublesome. The great salt plain, like that which I have al-

ready described, is rolling, and is destitute of trees of any kind, even the small tufts of poplar being conspicuous by their absence. The soil is sandy, with the indication of gravel here and there, and occasional lakes, the waters of which are quite brackish. We drove twenty-eight miles through it, and then came upon a lake in which the water was fresh, and halted for dinner. Beside the lake was a high knoll of ground, upon which some passers-by had erected a cairn of stones, giving it the appearance of a monumental mound. Wild ducks were marvellously plentiful, and, if I may use the expression, were very tame. We had reached almost to the borders of the plain, and already the indications of better country were apparent. We were fortunate in our hour for dinner, for almost immediately after it commenced to rain hard, and we had a disagreeable drive to our camping grounds, about seventy six miles from the Hills. Just as we were reaching it, we overtook a settler going in. He drove a light tent covered waggon, single horse, with single cart behind with the luggage, and one spare animal. As he camped near us we paid him a visit. He was an active, intelligent-looking man, on his way to Edmonton. He settled there five years ago, and had returned this year to get him a wife from Ottawa, his former place of residence; and the young couple were spending their honeymoon in the journey to the far West. He was greatly in love with his location. Already, he said, there were a number of settlers there, all doing well, and all anticipating meeting a rich reward from the local market, which new settlers going in will furnish. Our chat with him was not a long one, for it was getting late, it was a wet, dreary evening, and the preparations, in the way of getting firewood and water for supper, had to be made. We left him, wishing him all the prosperity that his enterprise and energy deserve. This was our most disagreeable night out, but we got on very comfortably.

On Saturday morning the rain still continued, and there was every appearance of a wet day, which, happily, the result did not justify. A drive of five miles brought us to the Humbolt station of the Canada Pacific Telegraph. Like everything else connected with public works in this region, it seems strangely located. It is a log hut, about a mile from the main line, and half-a-mile off the regular trail, and is connected with the main line by a branch wire. It was before seven o'clock, and the people in charge had

just got up. A young woman presented herself at the door, and to our enquiry as to whether the line was working, replied that it was working to Battleford, but that the eastern section was down. Her sister, who acts as operator, told us it was expected to be in working order that day or the next, and we left messages in the hope that her anticipations might prove true. "Is the line often down?" we enquired. "Very often," she replied. Her husband, who has charge of looking after it, had only this year been home for a fortnight. It is built through the miserable marshy muskeg, through which it was proposed, under the promptings of the malign influence which has ruled in Northwest matters during recent years, to carry the railway, and the poles go down at every storm. Our message was to the effect that there was no cause for alarm about the Indians. The woman read it over, and then looking up with a smile, said—"No cause for alarm; that's what they all say going up, but they think differently coming down." In answer to an enquiry whether she thought there were any grounds for alarm, she replied that she did not; but her sister was evidently less confident. "There'll be no cause for alarm," she said, "until the rising takes place, and then we may look for ourselves." Her anxiety is not unnatural. It was a lonesome place, for these two young women and a child to be all alone, miles away from any residence or any help in case of need. Heroic women these, bound to their lonely situation by sisterly and wifely duty. We crossed the telegraph line about three miles from the station, and for some distance the trail runs along side of it. It is as miserable a line as could well be imagined, and it is certainly not much to be wondered at that it is an exceptional circumstance when it is in working order. That it was built at all is an evidence of utter folly. The change of route of the railway will render it useless, and it will remain as evidence of the wastefulness and want of foresight of the Public Works Department under the regime of that practical Minister, Mr. Alexander Mackenzie.

Twelve miles from Humboldt we halted for breakfast, and from that point passed through a beautiful rolling country, the land most excellent. There is not much timber for the first ten miles; then we come upon frequent clumps of poplar, the country having a park like appearance, rich lawns fringed with woods. Suddenly, reaching the brow of a hill, a beau-

tiful lake appeared, surrounded by sloping hills, and studded with islands. The surroundings required only the houses to give them the appearance of a richly cultivated country. It was a beautiful sight, and it required not much faith to see in the early future, in the surroundings of this lake, the site of prosperous settlements of well-to-do farmers. The lake is familiarly known as Quill Lake, but on the map of the Northwest, it is indicated as Crimson lake, Quill Lakes, Great and Little, being situated north of Touchwood Hills. The twenty miles afternoon drive of Saturday was, having respect to the appearance of the country through which we were passing, perhaps the most charming of our journey thus far. We had seen abundant indications of the presence of badgers along the line, but had not seen an animal until then. Our Indian boy's keen eye spied one, and all the instincts of the sportsman were strong upon him in a moment. He dismounted his horse, and with his long whip-rope attacked it. The badger was a good size, and turned often upon the boy, who fairly roared, in his high falsetto voice, with the excitement. There was no use in killing the animal, however, and after ten minutes' fun, it was allowed to go on its way, with nothing more serious, as the result of the contest, than a few slaps from the whip. We camped for the night seven miles from the south branch of the Saskatchewan, expecting to reach this point early on Sunday.

We struck tent early yesterday. The morning was a beautiful one, and we had a chance of seeing what is not often seen, certainly not often by the denizens of cities, viz., the full moon disappearing in the west, and the sun rising in the east almost simultaneously. The moon had rather the advantage, and thus went down behind the hills of the Saskatchewan, still retaining much of its brightness, and in a halo of light. It was a fine sight, and was worth a journey to witness. We reached the banks of the river at about seven o'clock. There is a ferry across it—the scow, the best we had yet seen, being pulled across with oars, and not by a rope as is usual in ferries in this country. We called at the house near the ferry, and learned to our regret that the men had all gone to church, about twelve miles distant, and that on Sundays no ferrying was done until after twelve o'clock. It was not a pleasant prospect. We could not but respect the religious character of the people which prompted them thus to travel



so far to early mass, and to observe, for at least the forenoon, the sanctity of the Sabbath. But I am afraid I must confess that the prospect of remaining on the banks of this river for five or six hours, waiting for the return of the men, was not calculated to improve our tempers, or to fit us for the proper appreciation of the cause—undoubtedly a fitting one—of our detention. Fortunately it turned out that the ferryman had not gone to church after all, and in about half an hour, he walked leisurely down to the stream, got into his log canoe, and crossed over for the scow which happened to be on the other side of the river. The banks of the river at the point of crossing over are not very high, those on the westside being the higher, and being well wooded. The river is about a hundred and fifty yards wide at the point which we crossed, and is navigable for some distance further up. Near the ferry is a printed notice, protected from the weather by a kind of hood, giving the tariff of charges. They are from five cents for a single foot passenger to sixty cents for a double team. The scow being brought over, the waggons were put upon it, with two horses, required to haul them up the landing on the other side, and the rest of the animals were driven into the water, and swam across. From the ferryman we learned something of the progress of settlement in this part of the country—although it is not an easy thing to get information from half-breed settlers. They are very reticent, never volunteer either a statement or an opinion, and answer questions, as far as they can do so, by monosyllables. There are from a hundred and fifty to two hundred half-breed families settled on the banks of the South Saskatchewan between this point and the forks, as the confluence of the river with the North or Great Saskatchewan is called. These families are all from the Red River district. The majority, if not all of them, are people who had taken their scrip under the Manitoba Act, sold it to speculators in that commodity or to others, and coming further west have taken up homesteads on the banks of the river. They are all doing well, have broken up considerable land, and have raised good crops of wheat, for which the wants of settlers going in, or of the Government to feed the Indians, affords a good local market. Last year they got as high as two dollars a bushel for wheat, and this year they are getting a dollar and a half, and hope they may yet get the larger price again.

But when it is remembered that flour is sold at ten dollars a bag, equal to twenty dollars a barrel, there is still a considerable toll left for the miller and trader.

Safely across the river, we breakfasted before hitching up the horses, and then at about ten o'clock, started for Fort Carlton. The point of chief interest on the road is Duck Lake, about half way between the river and the fort. The Lake is not a very large one, and possesses no special features. But the approach to it is indicated by magnificent fields of wheat. I have been describing in the course of my chronicles, certain lands as of light sandy loam, inferior to the rich alluvial deposits of Manitoba; but here is precisely the same description of land, subjected to the test of cultivation, and the wheat we saw standing and in the sheaf was a sufficient proof of its excellence for agricultural purposes. There is a good deal of land broken up in the vicinity of the lake, which will be in crop next year, so that the Duck Lake district promises soon to be a populous and wealthy settlement. Messrs. Stobbert & Eden, of Manitoba, who are doing a good deal of business in the North-West, being the chief competitors of the Hudson's Bay Company, have a large establishment at the lake, a number of buildings within an inclosure. They have erected a tall flag-staff, from which the Union Jack was flying. A number of teepees or lodges of Indians were in the neighbourhood, some of whom I understood had not yet taken their treaty. As we pass the establishment of Messrs. Stobbert & Eden, we pass through a large tall posted gate, with two panels of fence on each side of it. This was erected by Chief Beardsie, an eccentric Indian Chief who has been putting forth rather extraordinary pretensions. He claimed a reservation two miles round the lake, which would include all the settlements, his intention being that the settlers should pay him an annual rental. His gate and panels of fencing are intended to enclose some ten thousand acres of land, or to at least assert his pretended proprietorship of it. He has refused to take the treaty, although recently most of his tribe have done so, and conscious of waning influence, he has himself shown indications of a disposition to take it now. He has had great influence with his tribe, which is due to the fact that he is a medicine man as well as a chief, and his followers are afraid of him.

Ten miles from Duck Lake brought us to Fort Carlton, on the Great Saskatchewan, and the leading post, in this western part of

the territory, of the Hudson's Bay Company. It is situated on the low plateau skirting the river, and is reached by a precipitous hill, the longest, except that descending to the Assiniboine at Fort Ellice, and the steepest without exception, that I have seen. A description of Carlton and a reference to matters of interest here, I must reserve for another letter.

### LETTER X.

FORT CARLTON AND ITS FORTIFICATIONS—INDIAN  
WARS—NAVIGATION ON THE SASKATCHEWAN  
—INDIAN DIFFICULTIES—A PROPOSED CON-  
FERENCE—NEWS FROM THE FRONTIER—  
GOVERNMENT FARMING—TIMBER AND COAL—  
THE RETURN HOMEWARD.

FORT CARLTON, 1st September, 1879.

My last letter, written this morning, brought us to this leading post of the Hudson's Bay Company. The post is under the charge of Mr. Lawrence Clarke, who has been for many years in the service, and is among the most able and active of the Company's servants. His jurisdiction extends to Fort Pitt in the west, and to La Corne eastward, and involves on his part a constant supervision of the Company's interests over an immense extent of territory. He was absent when we arrived, having been called away in connection with detentions and difficulties on the part of the Company's steamer Northcote in bringing up the farming instructors and their supplies. He returned, however, in the afternoon of yesterday, and we have been enjoying his hospitality in his comfortable residence near the fort. The stores and store-houses of the Company are enclosed within a stockade between sixteen and twenty feet high and two hundred and fifty feet square. At each corner are look-out towers, and within are posts about three feet from the stockade, with stretchers connecting them with it, upon which planks can be placed for the men defending the fort, from which they can see over it. All the forts that we have seen are thus stockaded, but none so high or so complete as this one. The object of these fortifications was not to defend the Company's employees from attack, but, in this case, it was built as a place of refuge for the Cree Indians, when attacked by the Blackfeet, be-

tween which tribes wars were very frequent. An attack was made upon the Crees by the Blackfeet as late as 1868, which was the last battle between the tribes. On that occasion the latter carried away all the horses of the former.

The Saskatchewan at this point is about six hundred feet wide. Near the centre of the river was what appeared to be an island of sand, with a scow lying at the off-bank of it, used in ferrying to the Company's large store-house, on the opposite side of the river. It turned out, however, upon closer examination, that what appeared to be an island was, in reality, a peninsula jutting out from this side of the river further up, and round a bend which concealed it from view. When the water is high, it is covered over. Fort Carlton is connected with Winnipeg, for purposes of transportation, by the steamer Northcote, which runs to Grand Rapids, separating Cedar Lake from Lake Winnipeg, and thence to Winnipeg by the steamer Colville; and with Fort Edmonton by the steamer Lily, also owned by the Company. The latter, unfortunately, at her last trip down, struck a rock and was sunk. She is built of steel, and is not considered, on that account, as fitted for the navigation of these waters, where many obstructions exist, obstructions which it would be money well-spent, to have removed. At the time of the accident, Lieut.-Governor Laird and Mr. Dewdney, the newly appointed Indian Superintendent, were on board. They were obliged to make their way down in a small boat. The navigation to this point may be considered as over for the season. The Northcote was not able to come up further than the South branch, below Prince Albert, at her last trip, so low has the water fallen. As an illustration of how rapidly and suddenly it sometimes falls, I may mention that at Fort Edmonton, just before the departure of the Lily on her last trip, the water fell two feet and a half in one night.

Last evening Mr. Fred. White, of the Department of the Interior, and Mr. Wadsworth, who is in charge of the farmers, arrived here, having come overland by the same trail that we had taken. Mr. Dewdney was expected, but did not arrive until this afternoon, when Mr. Orde, who came up to relieve Mr. Dickenson, the local Indian Superintendent at Battleford, arrived with him. Mr. White had paid the Indians at some of the points eastward, and Mr. Dewdney had met them for payment in the west. They were both of opinion that while there is undoubtedly

much misery among them, and probably some cases of actual starvation among the older people who at such times come off second best, there is no present danger of an uprising to be apprehended. The Chiefs everywhere had their grievances; every one wanted more than they were receiving; but in all cases had taken their treaty, and gone peacefully to their reserves. Here the chiefs had waited to see the superintendent, having learned that he was coming, and while waiting, of course, they and their counsellors had to be fed. This evening two of the chiefs called upon Mr. Dewdney. Their names were "Mistawasis," or The Little Child, and "Atahakoup," or The Star Blanket, the former a man of small stature, with a most benevolent, thoughtful looking face, the latter being taller and more muscular looking. Mr. Dewdney was disposed to have his conference with them at once, but that is not their method. It was evening, and they were not disposed to discuss into the night. An appointment was therefore made for to-morrow morning, at half past seven, that early hour being fixed at Mr. Dewdney's request, in order that he might be able to leave about the middle of the day for Prince Albert. I remain ever in order to hear the grievances of the Indians stated in their own words, and will send you the result.

A couple of half breeds have just come in from the other side of the line, and they bring, as is always the case, startling stories. They were among those who were taken prisoners by General Miles, being found, contrary to law, hunting buffalo on the American side. In conversation with them, for they were French half breeds, and conversation without the aid of an interpreter was therefore possible, I learned that they had been detained some days by the American troops, and were then sent away with an admonition not to come back again, or worse might befall them. They were permitted to bring with them the pemican they had made, so that they treated the whole affair as rather a good joke. They reported that the Sioux had made a line all along the border, in order to prevent the buffalo from coming north. They had seen some few on this side, but did not credit the stories which are prevalent of large herds having crossed the line and being on their way to the north. They had also a story of a fight between Sitting Bull and his braves and the American soldiers. The former, according to their report, were having the best of it, when the Americans were reinforced by bands of Che-

yennes and other Indians, and Sitting Bull's braves were driven back with some loss. It is, of course, impossible to say whether these stories are true or not. I give them as a sample of the tales which are constantly being brought into the fort by Indians and half breeds, and these, in this out-of-the-way place, really constitute to a large extent the news gatherers, and supply the place of the daily newspaper. If they are not always reliable, their sources of information are, at any rate, about as good as those of some of the correspondents whose lucubrations reach the reading public through the medium of the Associated Press despatches, and I have no doubt they are quite as conscientious in detailing their information.

Mr. Dewdney has already traversed a large part of the interior section of the territory, and visited the reserves. He has laid out the site of two farms which are to be worked for the Government, in order to obtain supplies for the Indians and the mounted police. The one is at Fort Calgary, on the Bow river, and the other at Fort McLeod, on the Belly river, both rivers being tributaries of the South Saskatchewan. They are just at the base of the Rocky Mountains, and are, in the meantime at any rate, far removed from settlements. It is expected that upwards of two hundred acres will be broken up this fall, ready for seed in the spring, and as mills are to be erected, the question of supplies in the far west will be solved to a large extent. The policy, where these farms are being established, is a good one, but it is a policy which has to be followed with some caution. It would not be wise for the Government to enter into competition with the settlers in the matter of raising supplies. The wants of the Indians and of the mounted police make for the settler going in a home market, for him a desideratum of great importance. The one question which overtops all others, is the settlement of the country, and every encouragement possible should be afforded to the settlers at the start. If the price has been a little high, the increase in the number of the settlers will soon regulate that on the principle of supply and demand. Already there have been some complaints that the Mounted Police are engaged in farming instead of in police duty. At Battleford, where there were some thirty stationed, it is said that not six were really ready for duty, the rest being employed as servants or farmers, or mechanics, doing work, in fact, which should be left to settlers and which would make for the

settlers a source of employment. There is no doubt that the police system requires to be thoroughly overhauled and the organization placed upon a better footing. And in doing this it will be wise not to attempt to use the men for the production of their own supplies. So with the farm instructors. There was a report that it was proposed to locate them on farms just outside of the reserves to which they are attached, using the produce of the farms they cultivate for Government purposes. Such a policy would be most unfortunate. To the extent that the Indians succeed as farmers, they will relieve the Government from the duty of supporting them, and thus by degrees the Indian question will settle itself. But the farmers should be simply instructors, nothing more; and that is a duty which is quite incompatible with the idea of their cultivating large farms themselves and for Government use. In writing thus, I am but reflecting the prevalent feeling in the country, a feeling which, as it seems to me, is based upon sound reason.

North of Carlton, I learn, there is an immense tract of splendid timber, which is certain to prove of great value to the country. It is chiefly spruce, but the trees are large and well fitted for building purposes. West of it, near Edmonton, coal has recently been discovered, and is believed to exist in large quantities. This year some of it was taken out, and was used on the steamer, proving to be of excellent quality. That which was taken out is bituminous, but it is said there are large deposits of anthracite coal to be found also. The country on the north of the river, and all the way up to the region of the Peace River, is well adapted for settlement, the land improving in quality as you go further north, until the Peace River country, which every one speaks of as a very paradise for settlement, is reached. To-morrow we turn our faces homeward. We are to go down the Saskatchewan in a York boat, the steamer having left. It is lying on the shore, the men busy caulking it to prevent leakage—a necessary precaution, as it has not been used for some time. It is a fine boat, twenty-six feet long, with nine feet beam. Our crew, consisting of eight Cree Indians, who have walked some eighteen miles in, have just arrived. The boat is to leave to-morrow morning, taking us up at Prince Albert, to which point we will drive after the Indian pow-wow is over.

## LETTER XI.

THE INDIAN POW-WOW—GRIEVANCES OF THE RED MEN—HOW THE TREATIES ARE CARRIED OUT—WILD MONTANA CATTLE FOR MILCH COWS—THE INDIAN QUESTION—GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS.

PRINCE ALBERT, 2nd Sept., 1879.

Mr. Dewdney was ready this morning for his conference at the appointed hour, but the chiefs did not appear until an hour later, and then insisted upon waiting the arrival of another, who had been sent for. Presently he appeared, a stout, vigorous looking man, upon whom want had as yet made no impression. His name was "Ketawayo," pronounced Cetewayo, signifying the man of wind. The conference took place in one of the offices of the Hudson's Bay Company. The three chiefs, with their councillors, were outside of a bar, the chiefs and two others, being seated on a form, and the five other Councillors being squatted on the floor, evidently a favourite attitude. A silence of a few minutes prevailed, and then "Atahakoup"—The Star Blanket—came forward. He shook hands first with Mr. Dewdney, then with the rest of us, and then commenced his statement. There had been some little difficulty about an interpreter, the Indians being specially suspicious on this point, and they had brought one of their own tribe, who was reputed to speak good English, to act in the capacity. But he broke down at the very outset; and Mr. Taylor, of the H. B. C's service, acted throughout the conference, the Indian standing by as a sort of check. The statement in the language of the interpreter, was as follows:—

We waited for you, and we see you now; we wonder if our word met you. We have often been talking of the promises we got, and when we saw that they were not carried out in their spirit, we made representations to the Minister, but they were as if they were thrown into the water. We are very glad to meet you now, as you come with full authority to act. We will not touch on anything but the promises which have not been fulfilled. We are very much pleased with the aid given us, as we hear of starvation on the plains, there being no buffalo. We are only beginning to be able to support ourselves, and it will take

time to do so fully. We want what aid Government can give us. We have endeavored to fulfil our part of the treaty. We know the plan of Government to make us self-supporting is a right one ; but we have not the knowledge to carry it out. A few of us have stuck manfully to the tilling of the soil, but many have not done so. The seed given to us has been put in the ground, and is producing well, but the crops are still standing, and until they are harvested we want aid. This is the view of all the chiefs ; we want a little help in shape of provisions until harvesting is done. The cattle we got from Government all died ; they were brought from Montana, and we protested that they would not do. We saw the keepers of them on horseback. We did not want at the time to annoy the Governor, and we took these cattle. They were like the wild fowl, we saw them here, and then they disappeared ; some, when tied in stables, choked themselves ; some could not be fed, and to catch them was a fight so wild were they. They did not take to the food, although the grass was good, and even barley and wheat fed to them in the sheaf had no effect upon them. In making the treaty, we expected to raise cattle from the six given to us, and we expect and hope Government will replace them. We have two oxen left, and these have been working all summer breaking up land. It is impossible that we can get on with these two oxen, and we want some aid if we can get it from Government ; and if this can be done, not only myself, but all who want to live by the cultivation of the soil, will be pleased. We think what we ask is not unreasonable, and we hope it will be granted. Another thing we wish to mention is about reserves. I pointed out where I wanted it and it was said a surveyor would be sent to survey it. I told the Commissioners at the Treaty that I had selected the spot I wanted. When the surveyor was sent out I could not get it laid out as I wanted it, and that has been troubling me since. I protested at the time, and the surveyor told me he was following out his instructions. I suggested that it would be better to postpone the survey until I had seen the Governor, and he postponed the survey. I saw the Governor, and he told me that as I wanted the lines laid out, they would be done. We wanted the three reserves to have a mile between them. There is a long distance between the reserves, and mine is in a part that is swampy and useless. We want it brought further south, so as to bring the reserves

nearer together, and prevent any large white settlements between them.

MISTAWAKES—the little child—attired in the red coat with gold lace trimming, and wearing the silver medal presented to the chiefs, then came forward and said : I will tell you, as we understood the treaty made with Governor Morris. We understood from him that he was coming into the country to help us to live, and we were told how we were to get a living, and we put ourselves at work at once to settle down. For every three families we were to get a plough and harrow ; and one yoke of oxen was to go with each three families. We have been told since that it is not in the treaty. In insisting on the yoke of oxen for the three families, we were not told we were not to get them, and we thought we would have them. As to the cattle, we never expected them to be brought from the Montana quarter, when we were told we were to get milching cows. What was the use of these cattle being brought so far, when tame cattle could have been had as near as the Prince Albert settlement, or Red River. We expected that we would have had good cattle, but those brought were so poor that it was a mockery of the promises to give us cattle with little else than skin and bone. We had great difficulty in getting the cattle on to our reserves, and we had no provisions given us to support us while driving them home. We put them into stables and did what we could with them. We were told by Governor Laird that they were tame, but I saw the Governor cutting away round from them. It would have been better to have given us some buffalos. Government is too slow in helping the Indians if they are going to help us at all. The fall before last we saw Governor Laird, and wished him to give us more ample assistance in the way of farm implements and seeds. He said his powers were limited, but he would write to the Government, and let us know. To all these representations we received no answer. The country is getting so poor that it is for us either death by starvation, and such aid as will enable us to live. The buffalo was our only dependence before the transfer of the country, and this and other wild animals are disappearing, and we must farm to enable us to live. Now, we want to know how we are to live this following winter, what help we can depend upon from Government in the shape of food. We have not come here, except from necessity ; but we want to know what quantity of food

we can depend upon for the winter. True, the Government have pacified the country, we have no longer wars with the Blackfeets, but the buffalo has been driven away. There is no longer war between the tribes; that has been stopped; but we are dependent now upon the Government for food. We are fond of money, but we are compelled to spend our annuity in getting food. This last winter we got a good deal of food from Government, and we are thankful for it. So far as we can see, the policy of the Government has been directed to its own advantage, and the Indians have not been considered so much. What we have mentioned, we would like the commissioner to consider, and we want a definite answer. When we are asked a question we answer yes or no, and we would like the Government to do the same. I am an old man now, and am at peace with every one; weak, and my dependence for support is centred on the Government. On the transfer of the country we were told that the Queen would do us all the good in the world, and that the Indians would see her bounty. With this message came presents of tobacco, and I took it at once; and I pray now that the bounty then promised may be extended to us.

KETAWAYO, was the next speaker. He said:—I understood the treaty in the same way that the others who have spoken understood it. When we asked for the yoke of oxen for each three families, although we were not told we should get them, we understood we would. If we had been told that we were not to get them, we would not have complained. It was the expectation of them that made us feel that we could live by breaking up ground. Every chief, we understood, was to get four oxen and six cows for himself; and we did not understand that they were to be used for the whole tribe. I think the aid from Government was very slow in coming. With a band of a hundred families it would be perfectly ridiculous that we could get on with four oxen. Every farmer, however poor, at Prince Albert has his yoke of oxen, and we have tried, and find that we cannot do with so few. We are new at this kind of work, but even white men cannot get on with so few oxen, and I agree with what has been said about the cattle. I was away when my tribe took them, or I would not have accepted them. We are not used to cattle, and when we were promised milk cows we expected they would be tame animals, that could be handled. We know why these Mon-

tana cattle were given us; because they were cheaper, and the Government, thinking us a simple people, thought we would take them. The cattle have all died. If we had got cattle of the country, and they had died, we would think it was our fault, and we would not have asked to have them replaced. We had plenty of hay, but the cattle were so poor that it did them no good. We were promised pigs and sheep and chickens, the first being promised in the treaty. We wanted a copy of the treaty at the time it was made, but did not get one until the winter before last. I know the pigs are mentioned in the treaty, but we are not yet in a position to support them, and we don't want them now. The chickens and sheep we understood we would get. We got some flour and ammunition from Major Walker, and an ox to kill. We do not want to kill the ox, we want to keep him for work, in putting in the crops in the spring. It is a good ox, trained to work, and I advised the band not to kill him, as he would be of more use to keep. If it had been one of these wild Montana cattle, I would have killed him. I hear of buffalo on the plains, and I am going off to see if I can get some food to pass the winter with. We would like to have some help in the shape of provisions in the meantime, and we wish to know what we can depend upon. The help which the Government and the Hudson's Bay Company have given us, has kept us alive until now. Mr. Clarke always gives us something when we come to the post. We hear that the Government are sending instructors. They are all from below, and if I am to have one, I would rather have one from the country, who understands the language, and with whom I could speak face to face, without an interpreter. There are not enough of instructors sent up, and if more are needed, I hope half-breeds will be selected, as it will help them, too. There are a lot of half-breeds who want to take the treaty and join the reserves, and who would be of assistance: but they were told that they could not come in, as they had white blood in their veins. Some of the families of the half-breeds were in the treaty, and the men would like to come in. He hoped a favorable view would be taken of their requests. It is better that we should tell each other what we think. Hitherto everything we have asked has been promised to be represented to the Government, but we have never got any answer, and we want now an answer. The chiefs were promised in the treaty a horse and wag-

gon. I have never got a horse, and I want one.

ATAHAKOUP again came forward, and said: I want to mention a few things more that I forgot before. I object to white men being sent us as instructors, as I would prefer to have had men in the country who understood the language. The men are here, and they cannot be sent back. I am glad instructors are coming; it is a good plan, and will teach us many things we want to know; and if we find them following the instructions of the Government, we will do all we can to follow their teaching. We are pleased with the grant of ammunition given to us, but we think it strange that we do not get gun caps. We mentioned this to Major Walker, and he said he had no instructions on the subject. We have some flint-locks among us yet, and we want some flints. There are fishing lakes where I live, and we get some twine for nets, but not enough for our purpose, and we would like to get an extra supply. The axes brought this year have been small ones, unfit for our use. We want larger ones.

A councillor, named Petewaka, then came forward; but it was getting late; we had to reach Prince Arthur, a distance of forty-eight miles by daylight this evening, and we were forced to leave. The statements of the chiefs I have given, as taken down from the interpreter, and I have no doubt those that followed were substantially the same. The burden of them all is the same. The disappearance of the buffalo has brought these people face to face with starvation, and they want food. They profess a willingness to work, and as to some of them the profession is an honest one. The two chiefs, first mentioned, are already becoming, for Indians, extensive farmers. Their complaint of want of good faith in carrying out the treaties on the part of the Government, is a most serious one. In some cases it is not justified, in others it rests upon too solid a foundation of truth. The complaint that they expected a yoke of oxen for every three families, and have not got them, involves no breach of treaty obligations on the part of the Government. They have got all that was promised them by the terms of the treaties. But it is to be feared that the Indian character was not sufficiently taken into account in dealing with them. That they asked for the oxen is undoubted; that an emphatic understanding that they must not expect them, was not arrived at, I fear is also too true; and with the Indian any request which he makes, and which is not positively refused, he assumes

to be granted.\* The request in this case certainly does not appear to have been an unreasonable one. If it was intended in good faith to give these oxen as working animals to break up land, with the view to the Indians becoming tillers of the soil, then certainly a yoke to every three families is not an exorbitant demand. That, however, was not in the treaty. What was in it, six milch cows to each band, seems to have been carried out in the most disgraceful way. To fulfil it by sending in wild Montana cattle, was surely a mockery, and there was a tone of bitter irony in the chief's remark that they knew why these cattle had been sent to them, because they were cheap. It is an unfortunate impression to get among the Indians that the treaties are made simply as a means of getting peaceable possession of the country, and to be kept with the least regard to their welfare. It would be interesting to know who supplied these cattle, and whether the same American speculators, who have been making a rich harvest out of supplying the wants of the Government in the Northwest, had a hand in the matter.

And these Montana cattle are not the only case in which the poor Indians have been the sufferers by Government contractors. They were promised carts, good ones, iron bound, and a horse and waggon for each chief. I saw in the yards of the Hudson's Bay Company some of the carts and waggons supplied, and which have been refused by those for whom they were intended. The carts are the poorest description of Red River carts, which have been used by freighters up to this point, and are really unfit for further use; while the waggons are literally falling to pieces. The Indians refused to take them, and they were right. Whether the Government have paid for them is another question, but I am inclined

\* Since this was written, I have received information which causes me to change my opinion. The treaty was made by the Honble. Mr. Morris, assisted by the Honble. Mr. Christie, a factor of the Hudson's Bay Company of twenty years' experience, and the Honble. James McKay, probably the most influential man in the Northwest in all matters relating to the Indians. A *verbatim* report of the negotiations was kept, and from this it appears that there was no room for misunderstanding on the part of the Indians. The extra cattle they asked for were positively refused, on the ground, among others, that several treaties had already been concluded with other tribes, and this would involve reopening them. It is to be regretted that Mr. Morris' recommendation, that the report of the negotiations should be published, was not acted upon by Mr. Mills.

to think it may be answered in the affirmative. So with the axes which have been obtained for them. They are here, miserably small ones, and have also been refused. It is in these matters that the Government have evidently been wrong, and have given the Indians the opportunity of accusing them of bad faith. Whatever may be said of the general policy in relation to the Indian question, and it is undoubtedly fraught with difficulties, there should be no question about the importance of a fulfilment of the obligations imposed by the treaties upon the Government, in such a manner as to remove all doubt in the minds of the Indians of their good faith. I believe Mr. Dewdney fully appreciates the importance of this view, but it is necessary that he should be armed with a large discretion. Much difficulty has arisen from the limited powers given to Governor Laird. From all I can hear he has performed the duties of his office faithfully and well, and he is certainly very popular. But his hands have been tied. Letters to the Department, while it had the misfortune to be under the charge of Mr. David Mills, remained unnoticed, until at last disheartened by this treatment he tendered his resignation. He was induced by Mr. Mackenzie to permit it to remain in abeyance for a time; but his treatment at the hands of a Minister of his own party, who succeeded him in the administration of the Department of the Interior, was anything but creditable. I hope Mr. Dewdney will have no grounds for similar complaint. If he is fit for the position, and I believe he is thoroughly fit for it, he should have at least discretion enough to enable him to meet cases of decided emergency.

I have referred to the manner in which contracts have been fulfilled, in relation to supplies for the Indians. I saw the evidence at Carlton that there is not much improvement in this respect. On the top of the hill leading down to the fort were six Red River carts, laden with agricultural implements. These, I learned, were for the Government, and were destined for Edmonton. They have been three months on the road from Winnipeg, are in charge of a single man, who complains that he is almost starved, his provisions having given out, and his animals—miserable ones at the start—are so utterly broken down that he can go no further. The implements, intended for use this fall, are due in Edmonton now, and yet here they are, after three months' trailing, only a little

more than half their journey. It is said the contractor for transport has sub-let his contract to persons evidently unequal to the responsibility. But whatever the cause, the fact is one which should challenge the closest enquiry, with a view to the prevention of the recurrence of such disasters in the future. It is to be hoped that the whole system of transport may soon be changed, a change which, as I propose showing before this series of letters is brought to a close, may be brought about at comparatively little expense, if the Government has the foresight to abandon the furs and feathers which have left so lamentable a record of waste of time and money in connection with the development of the North-West.

## LETTER XII.

CARLTON TO PRINCE ALBERT—SETTLER'S WORK  
AND SETTLER'S PROSPECTS—BISHOPAL MIS-  
SION—THE TOWN OF GOSHEN—MOORE'S  
MILLS—HOW MONEY HAS BEEN EXPENDED IN  
THE NORTHWEST—THE FARMER INSTRUCTORS  
—THE INDIANS.

PRINCE ALBERT, 3rd Sept., 1879.

We left Carlton at noon yesterday for our drive to this place, arriving about seven, making, allowing for an hour's halt for dinner, the distance of forty-eight miles in six hours, the best time made by us since our start from Portage La Prairie. The country through which we drove was a really magnificent one, and for the last twenty miles we passed through a continuous settlement, seeing at least from seventy-five to a hundred fields of splendid wheat, which the settlers are busy harvesting. For about five miles we drove through a regular forest of large spruce, the first timber we had seen since coming into the Northwest. It was quite like a Canadian forest, and in marked contrast with other parts of the country. We stopped for dinner near the house of a settler, Mr. George Findlay, and as his experience is a type of that of settlers in this part of the Northwest generally, I cannot do better than give it. Mr. Findlay is an active, intelligent man, thirty-one years of age. He is a Scotchman, from the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, served his time as a butcher, came to Canada about eleven years ago, and



worked for a while in Toronto at his trade. He came to the Northwest about five years ago, and was for a short time in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company. Three years ago he took up his present location, one hundred and sixty acres homestead, and a similar quantity as pre-emption. "What capital had you in starting?" we enquired. "About ten cents," he replied with a smile and shrug of the shoulders, the statement being, as we learned, literally true. A friend, who took up a like quantity of land adjoining him, and who was about equally penniless, worked with him on shares. They went to work courageously to break up their land and put in their crop of wheat, and have continued since breaking up more land and putting in more wheat. This year they have separated, each working upon his own farm, and each being about equally well advanced. Mr. Findlay has fifty acres under crop, thirty being in wheat and the balance in barley, oats, &c. He has a large vegetable garden, in which the vegetables are most luxuriant, and he is preparing to build himself a new house. "How many bushels do you expect to the acre of wheat this year?" we asked. "Well, last year I had thirty-four bushels, and the crop is better this year, so much better, that I think I will have at least over forty bushels to the acre." He will get a dollar and a half in trade, or a dollar in cash, a bushel for his crop. He employs two Sioux laborers, to each of whom he pays a dollar a day in trade, which is paid by orders upon the establishments purchasing his crop, generally the Hudson's Bay Company. His Sioux laborers have their teepees on the farm. He speaks well of them as laborers.

"Are there many settlers coming in from Ontario or other parts, Mr. Findlay?" we asked.

"Yes, a good many. Ten came in from Peterborough this year, but some of them did not think much of the country, and went back. I don't think they would like any country where they had to work; they had been counter jumping, and they evidently wanted something of that kind here."

"But this is a good country, is it not?" we enquired.

"Yes, none better. Anything will grow that is put in the ground here."

"I have no intention of buying your farm, Mr. Findlay; but what would you sell it for as it stands, after your three years' labour?" we asked.

He seemed at first indisposed to answer,

as we were not likely purchasers; but finally said he valued it at \$2,500.

"I would have sold it for less last winter," he said, "as I thought of going further west to Edmonton, but I have partly given up that idea."

"But, why should you go to Edmonton? You are well off here, are you not?" we asked.

"Yes; but those who get first into the Western country will reap a rich harvest from others going in, who will require seed and flour and cattle, and other things which they must buy from the settlers already there."

And this idea I find to be a prevalent one. Even here, the tendency of population is westward. Much of the settlement on the Northwest territories, is, as I have pointed out in former letters, from Manitoba, and as such points as the Prince Albert district or the South Saskatchewan, become occupied, the earlier settlers are disposed to pull up stakes, and go further into the interior. I think the western fever is over with Findlay. He certainly has no reason to complain. Three years ago without a dollar ahead of him; now the owner of three hundred and twenty acres of splendid land, fifty of them bearing crop; with five oxen and three cows; with a homestead and its improvements, which is certainly not overvalued at two thousand five hundred dollars; and with prospects that might well be the envy of any man. The story seems almost like a romance, but it is, as I have said, simply a type of the experience of hundreds of others who are settling in this marvellously productive country. Mr. Findlay was a little hard upon my old Peterboro' friends, but his remark carries with it a moral. This is no country for men who are not willing and able to work. Its conditions are immensely favorable; but let no one imagine, on that account, that it is a country where idleness or laziness will meet with other reward than that which happily, may I not say, follows them everywhere.

The farm I have been describing, and which may be said to be the beginning of the settlement between Fort Carlton and Prince Albert, is in the township of Lorne. The Prince Albert Settlement proper begins a few miles further on, and is undoubtedly the most prosperous of any in the Northwest. Last year a census was taken, and it was found to contain seven hundred persons, exclusive, of course, of Indians. The estimate

is that the number now will reach twelve hundred. It is, in fact, along the road one continuous settlement, and, for the first time, we drove for miles almost the whole way between fences. The great majority of the farmers are men who have come in without capital, and who are on the highway to fortune. The settlement is near the river, some of it extending to the river, so that there is an abundance of water. As we approach the village, we come upon the church of Bishop McLean, a large frame building, barn-like in its architecture, except for the small windows, and whitewashed. Near it is the church school, and a few yards further on, the episcopal residence, an unpretentious cottage. The Bishop himself was away from home. I saw him in Winnipeg, and he was expected up daily. He has been very successful in England in collecting for his proposed College, having raised about ten thousand pounds sterling, a sum of money which ought to be sufficient to accomplish a great deal. The Hudson's Bay post is about a mile eastward from the church, the barracks of a squad of mounted police being about half way between the two points: a large house, surrounded by a stockade fence. Orders have been given to lay out a town-plot on the Hudson's Bay Company's reserve, Mr. John Reid being entrusted with the survey. Already enquiries are being made for town lots, and there is little doubt that the town of Goshen, as I believe it is to be called, in honor of the Governor of the Company, will very soon be a large and prosperous one. It is beautifully situated, easy of access with the outside world by the river Saskatchewan, in the heart of an exceptionally fine agricultural district, and already the seat of whatever trade is done in the neighborhood. The Hudson's Bay Company are about erecting a flour mill, which will be in operation next season. About a mile from the Post is Captain Moore saw and grist mill, which is doing a good business, and supplying an important want of the settlers. The logs which are sawn at the mill are got from the north side of the river, where there is an abundance of good timber. Capt. Moore, the proprietor, is a young gentleman who first came into the Northwest on a hunting excursion, and became seized with the idea that there was an opening for such a business as that which he is now carrying on. I was glad to hear that his enterprise and pluck are

being rewarded with success. In connection with this mill I heard an incident which illustrates the manner in which Northwest expenditures were made by the late Administration. When Battleford was selected as the seat of Government, and why it was selected will always remain a profound mystery, and it was determined to erect Government buildings, Capt. Moore offered to supply the lumber, laid down at Battleford, for sixty dollars a thousand. He received no answer even to his offer; but instead, the Government gave the supplying of the lumber to Mr. Sutherland, furnishing him with a mill which was taken to Edmonton, whence the timber was obtained. The job, I have no doubt, was eminently profitable to the gentleman who was so fortunate as to obtain it; but the same cannot be said for the Government. The lumber which had been offered to be laid down at sixty dollars, cost two hundred dollars. Mr. Sutherland, if the statements I heard are accurate, and I have no reason to doubt them, has been a special favourite of the late Government, having received from them a grant, by order-in-council, of a hundred square miles of timber limits in the neighbourhood of Edmonton. The report here is that the order-in-council has been most properly cancelled by the present Ministry.

A number of the farmer instructors are here preparing to go to their different reserves from this point. They have had a hard time of it coming up. The arrangements for their transport do not appear to have been well made, though in a country where means of transport are limited, it is difficult to apportion blame for the blunders which have been committed. They were nineteen days on the steamer Northcote coming from Grand Rapids, the steamer having been overloaded with their supplies, and the water being low. It was intended at starting that they should go on to Carlton with the steamer, but this was found to be impossible, it being considered unsafe to come further up than the South Branch. The steamer went up that river instead of coming on to Prince Albert, and the goods had all to be carted a distance of eighteen miles. They are being classified this morning, under the superintendence of Mr. Palmer Clarke, the Indian agent at this point, and will be forwarded by the Hudson's Bay Company to their points of destination. As a rule, the farmers sent up are intelligent, active men, with the experience to fit them for the performance of the duties upon which they are

entering. Mr. Lawrence Clarke, the manager of the Hudson's Bay Company for this district, is here, and will remain until the men and their supplies are safely started upon their journeys.

The Indians in this neighborhood, that is those belonging to the reserve, are chiefly Crees, but there are a number of Sioux as well, the latter making excellent farm laborers. As we drove along, in all the wheat fields, the gathering and binding of the wheat was being done by Sioux Indians and Squaws. They get a dollar a day, in trade, for their labour, almost everything being, as yet, paid for in barter. The Sioux are a much finer race than any others that we have seen. Just as we are preparing to leave, two Sioux have come in from Sitting Bull's camp. They are tall, athletic looking fellows, and come nearer to the poetic conception of the "Noble Red Man of the Plains" than any whom we have seen. They carried with them the calumet, or pipe of peace, the bowl being beautifully cut from red pipe stone, and the stem, about fifteen inches long, being of flat wood about two inches wide, ornamented by two rows of brass-headed tacks. They were evidently in the most friendly mood, coming up and shaking hands, uttering their guttural "oogh"—which is the equivalent for "the top of the morning to you;" and having gone through this preliminary they squatted upon the ground and commenced to smoke, passing the pipe to and fro from one to the other, and looking as serious as if they were mourning for all their wives' relations. They brought no confirmation of the story we had heard at Carlton of fighting between the American troops and Sitting Bull; but they preferred, for the time at least, the greater quiet of the neighborhood of Prince Albert, to the watchfulness and danger of frontier life.

Our boat has just arrived from Carlton, and our traps and rations are being put on board. We start in a few minutes for our run down the Saskatchewan in an open boat. Four days, we expect, will take us to Cumberland House, on Lake Cumberland, from which point my next letter will be dated.

## LETTER XIII.

THE RAILWAY QUESTION—THE LINE FROM THUNDER BAY—THE PRESENT RAILWAY CONNECTIONS—EFFECT OF MONOPOLIES—A SCANDALOUS RECORD OF RATES—EVIL EFFECTS UPON THE QUESTION OF SETTLEMENT—CONDITION OF THE PEMBINA BRANCH.

ON THE SASKATCHEWAN,  
4th September, 1879.

There are two burning questions connected with the early and proper development of Manitoba and the Northwest, which in their importance take precedence of everything else, namely, the regulations relating to the disposal of the land, and the opening up of the country by a judicious and well-devised system of railways. As I have completed my journey, going over the country through which the railway must pass, I stop for a moment in my description of my trip, to deal with the railway question as it has presented itself to me in presence of the country to be developed. The first point to be considered is the line from Thunder Bay to the Red River, which is to be the means of ingress to and egress from the fertile belt; and the second the providing the means of cheap and speedy transport in the great wheat and cattle raising portion of the territory. The purchase of the country from the Hudson Bay Company was practically made in 1870, and it is certainly anything but creditable to Canada that nearly ten years should have elapsed without the means of communication through our own territory having been provided.

Winnipeg has now a population of from eight to nine thousand people, and settlement extends almost uninterruptedly for two hundred and fifty miles west of that city; and yet we are dependent upon American railways for access to the country, on which the rates for the carriage of freight are so exorbitant as to form a serious barrier to the growth and prosperity

of the country. It is important to point out the serious evil which this is by a statement of facts and figures.

The present railway system of Canada connects at Collingwood and Sarnia with lines of steamers on Lakes Huron and Superior which run to Thunder Bay, and thence to Duluth in the State of Minnesota. From Duluth the Northern Pacific railway runs to Bismarck on the Missouri River, and is crossed at Glyndon, about two hundred and fifty miles from Duluth, by the St. Paul and Pacific railway, which completes the connection with British territory at Emerson, whence the railway is continued, at present in a very incomplete state, to St. Boniface, opposite Winnipeg, with which place the American railway is also connected by a line of steamers on Red River, which, having been purchased by the railway company on very cheap terms, they naturally send nearly all their traffic by. By means of this St. Paul and Pacific Railway, which was completed to Emerson last fall, an all-rail connection is formed from Sarnia, through Chicago and St. Paul to Winnipeg.

The distance from Duluth to Winnipeg is about four hundred and eighty miles, which is about twenty to thirty miles longer than the distance will be from Thunder Bay to Winnipeg when the latter line is completed. The St. Paul & Pacific and the Northern Pacific Railways have entered into agreements by which the former fix the rates from Duluth to Emerson, which are the same as from St. Paul to Emerson. It is understood that the Northern Pacific would be prepared to materially modify their existing rates, but they cannot do so. To shew how disastrous this monopoly on the part of the St. Paul & Pacific Railway is, figures will speak more eloquently than words. Goods from England imported direct into Winnipeg are carried at through rates, and during the present season the rate has been \$2.70 per one hundred pounds. The division of this rate has been as follows:—From London or Liverpool through New York or Chicago to St. Paul, \$1.20 per one hundred pounds, the distance being three thousand miles of water from Liverpool to New York, and about thirteen hundred miles of railway from New York to St. Paul, making a total of four thousand three hundred miles; and from St. Paul to Winnipeg, a distance of about four hundred and eighty miles of railway, the charge is \$1.50 per hundred pounds. In other words, the charge for four thousand three hundred

miles of water and land carriage, including the cost of transfer in New York, is \$1.20, or thirty cents less than the charge of \$1.50 for about four hundred and eighty miles of land carriage by the St. Paul and Pacific. And to show how exorbitant are the rates of the latter Company, it may be stated that the proportion of the \$1.20 charged between Chicago and St. Paul, a distance of about four hundred and ten miles, is thirty cents per hundred pounds or only one-fifth of the charge made by the St. Paul & Pacific for its proportion of the through rate, its distance being only about seventy miles more, put the matter in all its glaring oppression it is then the fact that the through rate is made up as follows:—

Liverpool via New York to Chicago, 3,900 miles.....	0.90
Chicago to St. Paul, 420 miles.....	0.30
St. Paul to Winnipeg, 410 miles.....	1.50
Total.....	\$2.70

But it is not only from England that such monstrous rates are charged. The rates on goods from places in Canada are made up on a similar basis. Thus from Montreal to Winnipeg the all rail rates *via* Chicago or St. Paul are \$2.10 per hundred pounds, and *via* Sarnia and Duluth, \$1.90. By all rail from Montreal to St. Paul, a distance of twelve hundred and fifty miles, the rate is sixty cents per hundred, and from St. Paul to Winnipeg, a distance of four hundred and eighty miles, \$1.50, or two and a half times as much, for but little more than one-third the distance; or to put it in another way, the charge made by the St. Paul & Pacific, is proportionately about eight times as much as the charge made by the lines of railway between Montreal and St. Paul.

By way of Sarnia and Duluth the same oppressive charges are made. From Montreal to Winnipeg *via* Duluth, the rate is \$1.90 per hundred pounds, of which the proportion from Montreal *via* Sarnia to Duluth, is forty cents per hundred, the distance being from Montreal to Sarnia five hundred miles of railway, and from Sarnia to Duluth about one thousand miles by water, making a total of fifteen hundred miles, whilst the charge from Duluth to Winnipeg, a distance of four hundred and eighty miles, is, under the dictation of the St. Paul & Pacific monopoly, again \$1.50, making the total of \$1.90, which is the cheapest rate at which ordinary goods can be taken under present circumstances from Montreal to Winnipeg. From Quebec the rates are

higher, from Toronto somewhat less, but not very much.

Such rates as these, from the English and Canadian markets, from which the Northwest of Canada is supplied, are in the highest degree oppressive. They are an incubus of great weight upon the trade of a new and struggling community; they add largely to the cost of everything that has to be purchased by settlers, and in fact of necessity have a deterring effect upon the influx of those who would desire to become residents of the country.

To show how such rates of carriage must affect the country, it is useful to contrast the rates charged by the Northern Pacific when acting upon its own judgment, and not controlled by its monopolising ally, the St. Paul & Pacific. The distance from Duluth to Bismarck on the Missouri River is about the same as to Winnipeg, and the rate of freight on ordinary goods brought by water from Chicago is forty cents per hundred pounds, or very little more than one-fourth of the rate they are forced to charge to Winnipeg; and the rate from Bismarck to Fort Benton by steamer on the Missouri River, a distance of twelve hundred miles, is ninety cents per hundred pounds, making the through rate from Duluth to Benton, about seventeen hundred miles, \$1.30, or twenty cents less than the charge of \$1.50 for a distance of less than five hundred miles, to Winnipeg.

These figures speak for themselves. They are samples of a grinding monopoly which is most disastrous to the country, and point with terrible significance to the vital importance of completing the line from Thunder Bay to Winnipeg at the earliest possible moment. Why that line, on which such vast and growing interests are dependent, has been allowed to drag in its construction so lamentably, is almost impossible to understand. -Worked as that line must be, by the Government, so as to develop the resources of the country, of which it will be the outlet, what will be the result? The distance from Thunder Bay to Winnipeg will be between four hundred and fifty and four hundred and sixty miles. Applying the rates charged by the Grand Trunk, on its traffic to Duluth, between Montreal and Sarnia, the rate should not exceed, if it reaches thirty cents per hundred pounds. The through rate then from Montreal to Winnipeg, via Sarnia and Thunder Bay, will be from sixty-five to seventy cents per hundred pounds as against the present rate of \$1.90, or a saving of sixty

per cent on the present rates. At such reduced rates the country will thrive. The saving of outlay to merchants will at once stimulate trade, and settlers can either bring with them or buy at Winnipeg the supplies they require at fair and reasonable prices, which at present they cannot do. As regards lumber, a most important supply, the Thunder Bay line will prove of immense importance. At present the price of common lumber in Winnipeg is from twenty to twenty-two dollars per thousand feet, and the cost of transporting it from there, except along the Red and Assiniboine rivers, is prohibitory. As soon as the Thunder Bay line is running to Rat Portage, where inexhaustible supplies of timber exist, and where saw mills are now in course of erection, the price of lumber ought very materially to be reduced. The Government ought at once to attend to this very important matter and have arrangements made for the prompt and cheap transportation of lumber, the moment the railway is in a condition to transport it from Rat Portage.

At present the question of the transport of the productions of Manitoba to the eastward has not become very pressing, but that matter is imminent and will rapidly become most urgent. So far, the rush of new settlers has absorbed the great bulk of the products of the country both for purposes of food and seed. Up to last year flour was imported into Winnipeg from the States; now all articles of food are provided in the country, and no one can have travelled for nearly six hundred miles through the fertile belt, as I have done during the last two weeks, and seen field after field of splendid wheat, averaging twenty-five bushels to the acre, and rapidly falling under the latest pattern of Ontario manufacturers' best reaping machines, without being satisfied that the day is actually at hand when an outlet must be found for the products of that vast and most productive region.

Indeed, already the question is very urgently demanding an answer. Wheat buyers are to-day in Winnipeg making arrangements for the purchase of the surplus products of the country. Stores for the handling of grain already exist in Winnipeg. -I saw one a fortnight ago, at Portage La Prairie on the Assiniboine; one is in progress of construction at the boundary, near Emerson, to hold seventy thousand bushels; another is building at West Lynn, and, in fact, all that is wanted to start a considerable export trade in cereals is cheap and easy means of transport.

Now, the charge for carrying wheat from the boundary to Duluth is hoped to be as low as twenty cents a bushel, but it is quite likely to be more. It was higher than that last year. The boats on the Red River, owned by the St. Paul and Pacific monopoly, charge exorbitant rates, and the railway built by the Government, and which has been wrongly leased to a party of speculators, instead of being worked for the development of the country, proposes to charge for less than seventy miles, one-half the charge (or ten cents a bushel) made from the boundary to Duluth. This is following the monopolising tactics of the St. Paul & Pacific with a vengeance. With the line in operation from the Red River to Thunder Bay—with proper elevators there—and lines of propellers passing through the then enlarged Welland Canal, it is safe to anticipate, if the railway is properly worked by the Government for the purpose of developing the country, that the cost of transporting grain from the Red River to Montreal will not exceed twenty cents a bushel, and might by proper arrangements be done for fifteen cents a bushel, a figure which I have no doubt whatever myself will speedily be reached.

What a change will then be brought about! Goods from Quebec, Montreal and Toronto landed in Winnipeg for seventy cents hundred pounds instead of \$190; and wheat, the great export of the country, taken from the Red River to Montreal for fifteen cents a bushel instead of fifty cents or more, as at present. It will mean a revolution in trade. It will affect both the merchants and manufacturers of old Canada, and the people of the new country, benefitting both in an equal degree. The importance, therefore, of completing the railway from Emerson to Thunder Bay is incalculable. Every day's delay is disastrous. A very large part of the cost of this line has been already expended. The interest upon that outlay is being paid yearly. No benefit is at present being indirectly derived. Let the contractors have no peace till their work is completed. If they are not diligently prosecuting their contracts, let the work be taken out of their hands and energetically pushed to completion. Wherever trestle work or other expedient can be used to temporarily bridge over heavy pieces of work, use that process. In short, let the earliest possible completion of the line be one of the most earnest and practical parts of the

policy of the Government. It is the policy of common sense.

The line from St. Boniface to Emerson is in a very poor state and is being wretchedly worked. It's ballasting should be at once completed if serious future mischief is to be averted. Proper rolling stock, now quite inadequate, should be supplied, as well as the other appliances needed for the proper working of a railway; and it should be at once placed in the hands of a competent staff, and not allowed to be controlled by speculators or those who would like to make it an adjunct of American monopolisers, whose object instead of using it for the development of the country, would be to divert the trade from Canadian to American channels.

#### LETTER XIV.

RAILWAY EXTENSION IN THE NORTHWEST—THE QUESTION OF ROUTE—HOW THE ROADS SHOULD BE BUILT AND WORKED—THE AMERICAN SYSTEM OF WESTERN RAILWAYS—POLICIES OF THE CANADIAN POLICY—A SYSTEM OF WASTE OF TIME AND MONEY.

ON THE SASKATCHEWAN,  
5th September, 1879. }

Having in my last letter dealt with the question of the railway between Red River and Lake Superior, I propose now to deal with the proper course to be pursued in providing a railway system west of Red River as the means most conducive to the speedy settlement and development of the country. It is not necessary to dwell upon the character of the country to be developed; that has already been established in previous letters. In the first place, it is a matter of the greatest importance that the idea of placing the railway north of Lake Manitoba has been happily exploded. Through that country as far at least as Fort Pelly, the land is almost incapable of useful cultivation. It is reported to be mainly a vast morass through which it is nearly impossible to keep up the telegraph line, the wires being almost permanently down, and the transmission of messages therefore most regularly irregular. On the other hand, south of Lake Manitoba, the country is full of settlers, with a very large extent of ground already under cultivation, and with more land, to a large

extent, being broken up yearly. On the confines of Manitoba, across the Little Saskatchewan, and along the valleys of that river and the Assiniboine, as well as south of the latter, close down to the boundary, settlers are rapidly pouring in, so that, in fact, it is practically no exaggeration to say that in driving from Winnipeg to the junction of the Qu'Appelle River with the Assiniboine, a distance of two hundred and fifty miles westward, you are never completely out of sight of land under actual cultivation or settlement. That, of course, is the country to put a railway through to accommodate a large existing population, and to develop and settle a country capable of supporting happily, an enormous extent of emigration. Even beyond the Qu'Appelle there are considerable settlements on the South Branch of the Saskatchewan, at least two hundred families already farming successfully in the Prince Albert settlement, and even beyond that settlers round Edmonton, near the base of the Rocky Mountains.

The question of the general direction of the railway being settled, the vital one now is, as to the best and speediest plan for its construction. Fortunately, one hundred miles, ward of Winnipeg, are already under contract to a practical experienced contractor, who, if properly encouraged, ought to have the line fit to run trains upon by the time the harvest of 1880 is gathered in. For the whole distance of one hundred miles, the country is level, involving no engineering difficulties, and presenting facilities for the most rapid railway construction. It will pass through the most fertile and best settled part of Manitoba, and will provide railway accommodation to the western limits of the Province. After leaving Manitoba the country becomes more rolling, and is interspersed with numerous lakes and ponds. The earthworks will in consequence be somewhat heavier, but offering no difficulties in construction. From the end of the present contract the line may be extended due west to the Little Saskatchewan river, which can be crossed with the greatest ease and at comparatively small cost. The valley is wide, but the river not over one hundred feet wide. The river floods its banks, but probably two spans of one hundred feet for the bridge proper will be ample. There are easy depressions leading in and out of the valley which will greatly facilitate and cheapen the cost of bridging it. And the difficulties of construction which have been

conjured up at this point are purely imaginary. It is an important fact that in crossing the valley none of the piers of the bridge will require to be founded in water. They can all be put in on dry land and in good foundations. It would be wise to approach the bridge on both sides by short pieces of trestle work, which can be cheaply filled in afterwards by train, when ample experience has been obtained of the water ways necessary to carry off the freshest floods.

After leaving the Little Saskatchewan the country is again rolling with numerous small lakes, but very easy for the construction of a railway. The course of line westward after leaving the Little Saskatchewan may take one or two directions. A very judicious line would be to continue westward to strike the Assiniboine, the valley of which, about three-fourths of a mile wide, can be reached by an easy descent, neither difficult or costly to construct. It would accommodate a large and rapidly settling country both to the north and south of it, and would be extremely important in connection with Indian questions on the Qu'Appelle, and points west and south of the fort there. The river Assiniboine is less than two hundred feet wide, and it does not flood its banks. The valley is one of the most picturesque in the northern part of this continent. By crossing the river, by a bridge of one span, for which neither pier would be founded in water, below Bird Tail Creek, the line could be carried to Fort Ellice, which is distant about two hundred and fifty miles from Winnipeg, and which point at present is the limit of settlement, except at Prince Albert and Edmonton.

On this line, from Winnipeg to Fort Ellice, there are only two rivers to cross—the Little Saskatchewan and the Assiniboine and both by small and inexpensive structures. In fact, the entire distance of two hundred and fifty miles offers remarkable facilities for the cheap and speedy construction of a railway, which can, by judicious arrangements, be in full operation within three years from this date, at a cost of about three millions of dollars. That expenditure, producing such a line of railway, would cost Canada in annual interest, less than one hundred and fifty thousand dollars a year, and would almost directly yield a revenue of at least that amount by filling up the country with a thriving and industrious population.

From Fort Ellice, a line of easy construction, crossing the Qu'Appelle river by a

cheaply built bridge of one span, can be carried north of the Touchwood Hills, through a fine agricultural rolling country, capable of great development. It would meet with no river or creek of any size till it struck the south branch of the Saskatchewan, which should be crossed westward and south of the junction of that river with the main branch of the Saskatchewan, which should again be crossed somewhere in the vicinity of Prince Albert, where a large and rapidly growing settlement is already formed. The country on the north side of the Saskatchewan River, from its exit into Lake Winnipeg till the neighborhood of Prince Albert is reached, is not generally available for agricultural purposes. By crossing near Prince Albert, and then running northwest, it would strike, about seventy miles north of Carlton, a belt of heavily timbered country, containing enormous quantities of pine, spruce, tamarac, and other varieties of timber, which would prove of immense importance to the country traversed by the railway in its course from the East. Such a line would also be in the direction of the Peace River country, which is believed to be one of the very finest agricultural districts in the Northwest.

An alternative line has been suggested, after crossing the Little Saskatchewan, to run north of Fort Ellice, crossing the Assiniboine higher up, but having first to cross the considerable valleys of the Bird Tail and Snake Brook creeks, and then running into the line already described to cross the two branches of the Saskatchewan. Such a line has arguments in its favor, but it is believed that the line to Fort Ellice presents, on the whole, the balance of advantages. The principle should be to lay out a main line to pass through the districts which have already become the pioneer settlements of the country, and which are the nuclei of constantly widening and extending areas of population and development. Fresh districts, to be accommodated by the rivers which are crossed by the railway, and which are capable in some instances of extensive navigation, will also be developed, and hereafter no doubt the railway system will require extension by cheaply constructed branch lines, judiciously located, to meet the necessities of the population and to swell the traffic upon the main arterial line of railway. The crossings of the two branches of the Saskatchewan are neither of them formidable works. The banks on the South branch are the highest, but can easily be

overcome by natural depressions in the heights; whilst the main river in the vicinity of Prince Albert has low banks affording great facilities for the construction of a bridge.

Having now given an outline of the general course of a line to give the greatest aid to the speedy development of the country, the question of the best mode of building the line is of the most vital importance. And here advantage ought to be taken of the practical experience which has been afforded us by the operations of the Americans in the marvellous development of their Western territories. They have peopled those territories by rapidly building cheap colonization railways, sufficient at the start for the work they had to do, and which have been gradually strengthened and improved as the necessity for it became demonstrated.

Upwards of twenty years ago I travelled over many parts of Wisconsin and Illinois in which railways were then in course of construction. At that time the highest point on the Mississippi river, reached by a railway was Prairie du Chien. The lines then running were very cheaply built and had but little traffic upon them. I have been over them several times since, and have marvelled at their rapid extension, and their physical improvement as demanded by the increased work they have to do. In less than twenty years they have crossed by several lines the State of Wisconsin, have reached up the Mississippi river to Minneapolis, have stretched out their arms to the northern and western limits of the State of Minnesota—have crossed the territory of Dakota to the Missouri river, and are now being rapidly extended a further two hundred miles to the Yellowstone river, as a portion of the Northern Pacific Railway. They have had the same sort of work to do in building these lines that is before us in the development of our own territory in the North West. They have gone about their work on common sense principles; they have incurred no great outlays in comparatively abortive engineering preliminary explorations; they have put their cheap railways through their fertile belts of country, and the rapid march of settlement on the pathways thus laid out have repaid the country a hundred fold already.\*

\*On the Chicago and Northwestern Railway, which has been running for ten years, several heavy pieces of trestle work, which have carried the trains for those ten years, are now being gradually filled in with earth.—Under the Thunder Bay system the railway would have remained useless until the permanent works had been completed.



A contrary principle of action has been adopted by Canada, and what are the results? Six years ago elaborate engineering surveys were inaugurated in connection with the railway system west of Lake Superior, and their cost has already reached between three and four millions of dollars, with practically very little to show for it. Large parties were set to work in the district between Thunder Bay and Red River, and for the expense incurred every crag and every hollow ought to have been thoroughly examined and elaborately reported on. Contracts based on the expensive information thus derived were let, and it was officially declared that so carefully had the plans been prepared, and the details of work so accurately ascertained, that the cost could be positively determined, and that the line would be finished for an outlay vastly less than any railway, in a rather difficult country, had ever yet been constructed for. At the end of the six years not a mile of the railway is available for traffic purposes, and so absurd have proved the engineering calculations, arrived at after such extravagant cost, that it is now stated the cost will be double at least what was at first supposed and officially announced, and that three years' more time must elapse before the line can be in operation!

Again, nearly six years ago, the line of 70 miles from Winnipeg to Emerson, through a country which is practically a dead level the whole way, was commenced. It is not yet completed, and is practically so far useless. What its cost will prove to be no one yet knows. All these works were let on what is known as the schedule of prices system, and their cost will never be entirely known until they are fully completed and paid for.

It is quite safe, however, to say, with the official information already furnished, that the line of railway from Thunder Bay to Emerson will not be in full operation for three years yet, and that the cost of that line, with the outlay for engineering explorations up to the same time, judged by past experience, will reach a total of not far short of \$30,000,000. And it is equally safe to say that if the American system of building these railways had been adopted—if the object had been to secure an entrance into the country, and a colonization railway through it, at the cheapest possible first cost and in the shortest possible space of time—that an expenditure of the same amount would have completed for practical

use, by the end of next year at the latest, a useful line of railway from Thunder Bay to the Red River, and its continuation to a point not far distant from the base of the Rocky Mountains. Mountains of rock and valleys of morass would not have been sought out as the most available method of expending the largest possible amounts of public money; but a useful line of railway would have been in operation for upwards of a thousand miles west of Lake Superior, filling in as it went along a splendid agricultural country, west of the Red River, with a thriving happy population.

The time has come when a system so costly and so dilatory in its execution must be abandoned. Canada cannot afford so luxurious a method of peopling its fertile territory. Practical common sense must take the place of so-called elaborate scientific theory. The American plan of fixing on certain objective points and letting the work between them at so much per mile must be adopted. In the spring of this year two hundred miles of railway without rolling stock was let between the Missouri and Yellow Stone Rivers for \$7,500 a mile, and will be finished in less than eighteen months from the time the contract was let. The information obtained by the engineers so far, whatever it may be, must be put into a practical shape for public use. Reasonable, and proper specifications and contracts must be prepared and published. And then tenders should be asked for at a rate per mile to include everything necessary to enable trains to run. Experienced contractors with such information before them, by going over the country, can make safe estimates of the cost at which they will undertake to do the work. Then a practical engineer, who has been accustomed to such work, appointed to see to the proper execution of the work, can lay out and define the line as the work progresses, meeting difficulties that may arise, and producing a good useful line of railway, fit for the work it will have to do, and capable of being strengthened and improved, as the necessity therefor becomes apparent.

On such a system the needed colonization railways can be cheaply and speedily constructed. On the old Thunder Bay system they cannot. It rests with the Government of the country, who have the great duty of laying the foundations of an Empire in their hands, to shape out a wise policy in these matters, to shake off the costly trammels of the past, and to strike out a railway policy

which will speedily people these vast and magnificent districts. And when this line of railway is in operation, it must be worked cheaply as a Government line—rates fixed so as the most speedily to develop the resources of the country—and above all to avoid letting the railway get into the hands of speculators, or of people who will attempt to carry out a second edition of the St. Paul & Pacific Railway monopoly.

## LETTER XV.

ON THE SASKATCHEWAN IN A YORK BOAT—STUCK  
IN THE RAPIDS—FORT LACORNE—AN INDIAN  
TRADE—DRIFTING AT NIGHT—TRAILING UP  
THE BIGSTONE.

FORT CUMBERLAND,  
September 8, 1879. }

We left Prince Albert on the 3rd, the date of my last letter, about one o'clock, and had our first experience in a York boat on the Saskatchewan. It was a fine day, with a favoring wind, and after some little difficulty in getting over a sand bar at starting, we hoisted sail, and went along swimmingly for about an hour, when the wind fell, and the men were forced to rely upon the oars. Another hour, and we were pulled in shore, the mast taken down and lashed to the outside of the boat. "What is that for, Johnny?" we enquired of Johnny Brass, whom we have taken along with us, a piece of foresight upon which we have since had hourly reason to congratulate ourselves. "They are coming near the rapids, sir, and they can't manage the boat so well with the mast up," was the reply. The rapids proved to be the first of a series which at this point in the river extend for about ten miles at intervals, ending with the Cole's Falls. As we entered them, the scene was very exciting. The crew shouted to one another, the word "Sokkan," pronounced Saughay, and signifying pull harder, being the prominent ejaculation, and as the boat emerged from the rapid, they yelled with apparent delight, and then went on talking and laughing and joking, always in the high falsetto key which is the characteristic of their race. At about six o'clock, very early as it seemed to us, they pulled in shore for camp; but it was explained that just below, the river was narrow and

the rapids swifter, and it was not considered safe to go on as the darkness was approaching. We had reason afterwards to thank our stars at the caution of the crew.

A hearty supper, and a good night's rest, the first without tent coverings, prepared us for the journey onward, and after a cup of tea and a biscuit, we made our second day's start. We passed through a small rapid, and then came to Cole's Falls, which, as Prof. Selwyn describes them, are "over large boulders of limestone, gneiss and granite." The men set themselves to their oars, and the shouting commenced. "Sok-kan," "Sok-kan," shouted the steers man; "Sok-kan," "Sok-kan," repeated in fiercer tones our stroke oar. The men bent to their work with all their might; when, crash! we found ourselves in the roughest part of the rapid, fast upon the rocks. For a moment there was perfect stillness, each looking at the other and seeing there the evident realization of danger. Then the babel of tongues began. From the position of the boat it was evident that the bow was over the rocks, as it was much lower in the water, but the grip which had been taken was a firm one, as all efforts to release it seemed unavailing. Presently some of the men began to tear up some of the sheathing in the boat, with the intention, as it appeared, of seeing whether she was making water, an operation not reassuring; but the inspection was satisfactory in this, that it showed that whatever danger was in store for us, the boat had not yet been injured by the blow. The men seemed utterly helpless for some moments, and moments on a rock in a violent rapid, at least a hundred yards from the nearest shore, count for minutes at any other time. Finally, our steersman roused himself to effort, the noise ceased, and the men obeyed his directions; he was evidently trying to turn the boat, and his success promised another danger, that of going down broadside and striking, when the chances would be in favor of an upset. By dint of great effort he succeeded in lifting the boat from her position; the men were at their oars in an instant. "Sok-kan," "sok-kan," they all appeared to shout together; we were broadside to the current, but they succeeded in heading her down nearer the shore, and in a minute or two we were safely through, having been just twenty minutes in our unfortunate and dangerous plight.

Shortly after leaving the rapids it began to rain, and our tarpaulins were brought into requisition to prevent our getting drenched.

At about noon we reached La Corne, a post of the Hudson's Bay Company, attached to Fort Carlton. The banks of the river at this point are high and precipitous. This has been their general character from Prince Albert, with exceptions here and there affording easy crossing for the railway if it should be brought in this direction. As a rule, the shores on each side present the appearance of battlements, jutting out, with large gulleys between them, in some cases so sharp as to resemble the teeth of a saw. This condition has been caused by the combined action of water and wind upon the sandy formation, the prevailing character of the ground being sand intermingled, at intervals, with a lightish clay. The buildings at Fort La Corne are on the hill, and we had to clamber up the slippery clay—rendered slippery by the rain of the morning—to reach them. Mr. Goodfellow, who has been some twenty years in the Company's service, is in charge of the post, and from him we got a good deal of information about the district adjoining. La Corne is seventy miles from Prince Albert. There is a small settlement of half breeds in the immediate vicinity of the post, who are successfully farming, and an English settlement is forming on the Carrot river, or as it is called in the maps, the Root river, which is doing remarkably well. The country between La Corne and Pasquia hills, watered by the Root River, is said to be a very fine one, admirably fitted for farming purposes, and is already attracting considerable attention on the part of intending settlers. There is a Church of England mission here. A small building on the opposite side of the river was used formerly as a mission church, but it is being removed about three miles further on, to the Indian reserve. The mission is under the charge of the Rev. Mr. Mackay, of Prince Albert, who visits it about three times a year. But a native catechist is in constant charge of it, and keeps up the religious services.

Having dined with Mr. Goodfellow, we started again on our journey. Presently we saw a bark canoe on the shore, the first we had seen, and as we approached, espied an old man, an Indian—but evidently not of pure blood—squatting beside it. Our men hailed him and he replied. A confab took place, which resulted in our pulling ashore, and which, as we afterwards learned, was a negotiation for a trade of pemican for fish. The spot was a very pretty one, a sloping, gravelly beach, with a fringe of young poplars as

background. At the entrance to what, I suppose, was the old man's teepee, though it was not visible, two or three steps had been made, and a couple of short poles, with a cross-bar above them, formed the gateway. Presently a squaw emerged from the woods and stood in the gate, ready to complete the trade. It consisted of a frying pan full of pemican, and one and a half full of flour for two large sturgeons. From what I have seen of these fish, I am bound to say that the Indians on shore had the best of the bargain. However, if our men had the worst of it in this bargain, they had decidedly the best of it the following day, when, seeing the skeleton of a teepee, they deliberately pulled ashore and appropriated some of the best of the poles. The afternoon turned out a very wet one. The rain came down in torrents, and we stopped for the night, with the conviction that it was destined to be a miserable one. We managed, however, by means of tent and sail and tarpaulins, to cover the boat over, and had, after all, a good night's sleep.

The next morning was a beautiful one, and we got an early start. Nothing of interest occurred all day. The river widened at times, being at points about as wide as the St. Lawrence, and the shores were generally from four to eight feet above the water, the land being a light clay, and evidently washing away each year. Our object was to get through Tobin's rapids if possible that evening, as the indications caused us to believe we were nearing them. That this was impossible, however, was soon apparent; and the man at the helm, unwilling to risk getting into them at night—an unwillingness in which, after our experience of Cole's Falls, we entirely shared, we camped at a little after six, in the almost immediate vicinity, as we supposed, of the rapids, determined to make an early start, and by that means get into Cumberland House, if possible, on Saturday night, or at the latest early on Sunday morning. The early start we did make, but we found that we had been sadly out in our calculations, and that we might have drifted during the night for fifteen or twenty miles without danger. The river for some miles above the rapids is full of islands. We had been passing through them the previous afternoon, a fact which had somewhat deceived us in our calculation, and in the morning our experience was the same. It was near eleven o'clock when the rapids were reached, and we passed through them

almost unconscious of their presence. They are not, as rapids, very serious to encounter.

We had just got through them when we found ourselves stuck fast on a sand bar. It seemed to stretch all the way across the river, and the water immediately around us was not, in places, much more than six inches deep. It was a case of practical portaging, and the men went at it with apparent pleasure, if one could judge from their laughter. They all got out of the boat, four on each side, and literally jerked her over the bar, the operation taking half an hour to perform. For some time the water was very shallow, and there were indications of a filling in process going on. Islands were very numerous, and snags and drift timber prevailed. As we approached the point where the Sturgeon river falls into the Saskatchewan, we appeared to be entering a cul-de-sac. The channel, if there was one, certainly appeared to be to the northward, but presently we veered towards the south, and entered what seemed a wash out from some great freshet. The stream was full of fallen trees, the brush on each side extending out into the water; the channel was narrow and it seemed impossible that the great body of water through which we had been passing, could find its outlet by this place. Our faith in our helmsman for a moment almost wavered; but he seemed confident, and remembering that "you must not speak to the man at the wheel," we submitted. How the steamer ever gets through this place is a marvel, but it does get through, as it is the only way open to it. We hauled up for supper, and then Johnny Brass informed us we were going to drift through the night so as to get to Cumberland early in the morning. We did drift. In the middle of the night my companion de voyage was awakened by heavy snoring. He looked up, and found every soul on board fast asleep, including the steersman who was lying with his head almost out of the boat, and from whom the snoring had come. It was drifting with a vengeance.

Sunday morning broke upon us with a clear, cloudless sky, giving promise, which was happily realized, of a beautiful day. We expected to get to Cumberland House by about ten o'clock, but we were sadly disappointed. As we went on, the character of timber began to change, being larger, and including, in addition to spruce and poplar, some good trees of elm. Presently the men, during one of their intervals of rest, for they

row and drift about twenty minutes alternately, washed their faces and began to fix themselves up. "What are they doing that for?" we asked. "They are getting ready to go into Cumberland," said Johnny Bras. But we were a long way off yet as it turned out. The same character of islands prevails in the river; one near the confluence of the Bigstone and Saskatchewan, being an almost perfect resemblance to St. Helen's Island. At last, at four o'clock in the afternoon, we reached the mouth of the Bigstone, and turned up for an hour's pull, as we supposed, to our destination. The current was very strong, the stream running like a mill race. The boat was kept well in shore, and presently ran aground. The men jumped into the water, and pushed her over, but it soon became evident that to row her up would be a desperate task. It was resolved to trail her. Ropes were fixed to her bow, six of the men went ashore, one of them armed with an axe, three, including the steersman, remaining on board, two in front, one with an axe to clear away obstructions. The brush work was thick up to the very edge of the water, and all along trees and brush had fallen in. It was through this that the trailing had to be done. The man on shore with the axe felled trees which presented otherwise insuperable difficulties; the man in the bow did the same with the branches which obstructed our passage. It was a slow process, and to add to our comfort, the mosquitoes came out in great numbers. Finally the darkness made it impossible to get on, and we had to camp for the night, taking our evening meal in the dark, or with such light as the camp fire on shore reflected. In the morning we had a couple of hours more trailing before we reached the lake. We had from this point a river of about three miles long, formed by a narrow strip of land which separated us from the lake, which the men rowed up, and we reached Cumberland House at about ten o'clock, being nearly five days from Prince Albert. All along the river we had noticed an almost entire absence of game, or of birds of any kind. We saw a black bear, half a dozen ducks, some few yellowlegs, and a wild goose; not much, you will say, to see in a five days' journey on the Saskatchewan. Pembina berries, however, were very plentiful, and the men, at each stoppage, seemed to enjoy them, stopping even in their trailing up the Bigstone to have a feast. They are high bush cranberries, resemble the ordinary cranberry in taste, and make a most excellent jelly. We

did not take to them, however, having some doubts of the wisdom of eating sour berries on such a trip; and, until we had learned more about them, not much relishing even their flavour.

## LETTER XVI.

THE STEAMER NORTHCOTE—COMPLAINTS OF THE INDIANS—DAMAGED SUPPLIES—ARRIVAL OF THE MACKENZIE RIVER FURS—A MODERN RIF VAN WINKLE—YORK BOAT TRANSPORTATION—THE INDIAN MISSIONS.

THE PAS, 9th September, 1879.

In nearing the Cumberland House, from which my last letter was dated, we saw the funnels of the steamer Northcote, which had left the south branch ten days before. We had no expectation of overtaking her, and much as we had enjoyed our five days of life in a York boat, I must confess that we were glad of the accident which had detained her. Upon enquiry we found that she had remained here for the boats bringing furs from the Mackenzie River, which had been expected daily since her arrival. They were expected that day without fail, and we had the prospect therefore of making the balance of our journey by steamer, instead of, as we anticipated, by open boat. The steamer, the property of the Hudson's Bay Company, and until this year employed exclusively in its service, is one of the best river boats afloat. The Skipper, Captain John Griggs, who has had experience on the Mississippi, the Missouri and the Red Rivers, bears this testimony in her favour. She draws, when light, only eighteen inches of water, and when loaded about a foot more; and her usual cargo is about one hundred and fifty tons. On her last trip up, she carried two hundred and four tons, too much for the condition in which the water was at the time, and, as a consequence, experienced great difficulty on the river, being compelled, as I have already stated, to land her cargo at the south branch, instead of at Carlton as was intended.

Fort Cumberland is the prettiest place we have yet seen. It is situated on the Cumberland Lake, or as it is called in the railway map of the Northwest, the Pine Island lake. The buildings are substantial, and are separated from the lake by a picket fence neatly painted, giving it a very fine appearance.

We landed near the steamer, which had not been able to approach the regular wharf, in front of the fort, on account of the shoal water; and a walk through the woods of about a quarter of a mile brought us to the residence of Mr. Belanger, who has charge of the Company's interests in this district. On our way we passed a burying ground, which Mr. Belanger has, with a goodness of heart which does him credit, rescued from utter oblivion by putting a new stockade fence round it. It was used as the last resting place of servants of the Company and their families, and in some cases of Indians. Some of the graves have the mementos of affection in the form of memorial stones, the oldest that I saw, bearing the date of 1845. Mr. Belanger is a half brother of the late Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec, Mr. Luc Letellier de St. Just, and a cousin to the member for Hochelaga, Mr. Louis Beaubien. He was absent from home, having been compelled to leave for this place, one of the Company's posts on the Saskatchewan, to be present at the payment of the Indians, which took place on Monday. We were, however, hospitably entertained by Madame Belanger, and spent an exceedingly agreeable day. The Indians had been paid here on Friday, but many of them remained over, and when it was learned that the Land Commissioner of the Company was present, they begged an interview, in order that some grievances of which they complained might through him be reported to the Government. The chief, John Cochrane, and his councillors, having been granted an interview, expressed through an interpreter, in the usual formal manner, their pleasure at seeing Mr. Brydges, and their high opinion of him, and then proceeded to state the complaints they had to make. The Chief, however, was very ill, a victim evidently to that scourge of the Indians, consumption, and was unable to make a sustained statement, so that the interview very soon lapsed into a general conversation in which the translator, himself a treaty Indian, but marvellously like a son of the Emerald Isle, mixed up remarks and explanations of his own, with those of the chief and his councillors. They complain:—

1st. That the Reservation promised them has not yet been surveyed; and they wish, when it is surveyed, which they hope will be soon, that it may be on good land; the land about the lake, they say is, as a rule, low and swampy, and unfit for farming purposes. Some of them have settled round the Mission Church, on the other side of a little bay running in from the lake, and are doing

some farming. This land they want to have appropriated to them, when the survey is made, and the balance, to make up their Reservation, they wish to have selected in localities suited for farming. About eighty families altogether, are interested in the land about the mission.

2nd. They complain that the animals which were promised them at the time the treaty was made, viz. : a yoke of oxen, a bull and four cows, have not yet been supplied to them. For the last two years they have made hay in anticipation of these animals being given to them, and the hay, as well as their trouble, has been lost. These cattle, they say, have been promised them every year, but have not yet come to them. Mr. Mackay, the newly-appointed Indian agent, and whose appointment they have received with great satisfaction, as he speaks their language, has promised to represent this fact to the Government; but I am afraid that it will be impossible this year to get the cattle to them.

3rd. They want seed which was promised to them. They have had some potatoes for seed but not enough, and they require more.

4th. They have received the ploughs and harrows which were promised them, but as they have not had the oxen, they have been compelled to draw them themselves. This they do by attaching a rope to them, and then a dozen Indians passing the rope on their shoulders, pull the implement through the ground. Their shoulders, they complain, are almost bare with this kind of work, of the necessity for which they complain bitterly. They want a large number of hoes, having only received six in the five years since the treaty. Twenty more have come up this year, but they would be glad to have a larger number, as in the stony ground about the lake the hoe is a most useful implement.

5th. They complain that the supplies that have come up to them this year are in a bad condition. They have got wet in the transporting, and the tea and tobacco are to some extent blue-moulded with the water, while the flour was much injured, the bags broken, and the flour caked in some cases into lumps. The bags in which the flour was put up, they say, are altogether too thin, being simply strong factory cotton. They wish that it should be put in stronger bags.

These were their complaints. They mentioned that they would be very glad to have a farmer instructor, to teach them to cultivate successfully the land. The

fish in the Lake, which is their chief dependence for food, they say are becoming more scarce, and they realize that they must learn to depend upon the cultivation of the soil for a living. Mr. Brydges replied to them that while he did not in any way represent the Government, and had no authority to speak in its name, he would convey their representations to the Minister, and had no doubt that everything that could be done, would be done to improve their condition. He mentioned the appointment of an Indian Superintendent in the person of Mr. Dewdney, who would most likely visit Cumberland next year, a piece of information that seemed to please them greatly. They feel keenly that representations and complaints made by them in the past, have either never been forwarded to Ottawa, or if forwarded, have been treated with indifference. We examined the stores which they complained of, and certainly their complaints in this respect are well founded. The flour, particularly, was in a wretched condition. It had been transported to Grand Rapids in a schooner, and thence to Cumberland in an open boat, without even the precaution of a tarpaulin covering; and the bags were certainly very thin.

Just as the conference was over, news came that the boats for which the steamer had been waiting were in sight. The news caused quite a flutter of excitement; the Indian women and children gathered upon the wharf, and as the boats approached, and the crew landed, the hand shaking and mutual greeting became general. Among those who came by the boats was an old gentleman, a Mr. Taylor, who has been at the Mackenzie River, in the service of the company for the last forty-three years. He left the Orkneys a young man forty-four years ago, came into the country by Hudson's Bay, and has never left it since. He had never seen a steamboat, until he saw the Northcote. He has not yet seen a railway. All the wonderful inventions, and their still more wonderful results, of the last half century are things unknown, except by reading, to him. He is, in fact, a very Rip Van Winkle, waking up after forty-three years of absolute seclusion from contact with the outside world and its busy changes. He is on his way to Scotland to visit his old home. There are many surprises in store for him, but the greatest and saddest of them all will be the changes he will find in the scenes of his boyhood days, in anticipation of a reunion with which he is

daily living. He left the Mackenzie River on the 10th June last, and has, therefore, been very nearly three months on the journey. In answer to enquiries, he informed us that at the Mackenzie river, the year is divided into three months of summer and nine of winter. Potatoes and other vegetables are grown, but grain is an impossible crop. The Indians live altogether by hunting and fishing. Deer is very plentiful, so plentiful that Mr Taylor has seen a lake in winter literally black with them. "It is very cold there, is it not?" we enquired. "It's very cold," he replied. "I have seen the thermometer fifty-seven degrees below zero. When you go out, on these very cold days, your breathing is like a moaning whistle, so intense is the temperature." And yet the old gentleman thinks he may come back again. He liked the place; so easily do the denizens of the British Isles adapt themselves to circumstances.

The boats that came in were loaded with furs. They had come from the La Loche portage, where they were met by others from the Mackenzie, with which they exchanged their cargoes of provisions going north for the furs coming south. The furs are put up in packages closely pressed, and weighing on an average about one hundred pounds each. The work of getting them down is a serious one. They have been just thirty-one days coming from the La Loche, and the difficulties of the journey may be estimated from the fact that they had to make no less than thirty-six portages in that distance. At each of these portages the boats are unloaded and the cargo carried across. Each man takes two of the bundles, fastened together with a strap which is slung across the forehead, the bundles hanging on his back. Thus laden, with their load of two hundred pounds weight, they cross the portage at almost a running pace. Then the boat is hauled up, and by a long rope at the bow, and rollers under her, is dragged across, and launched on the other side. It is not many years since this was the only means of transportation over the water ways of the Northwest. Now the steamers of the Hudson Bay Company which make the distance from Winnipeg to Edmonton with one portage, that at Grand Rapids, which is crossed by a tramway, have wonderfully lessened the difficulties, both in time and labor of transportation. As an illustration of what improvements in the matter of transportation have done during recent years, it may be stated that only a comparatively short time

ago it took seven years to make up, in England, the result of one year's business at Mackenzie River; now it can be done in two years.

The boats having arrived, all but one, whose arrival is uncertain, it was resolved to start the Northcote at once, and the announcement was made that she would leave about five o'clock. We availed ourselves of the interval to call and pay our respects to the Rev. Mr. Paquette, the Roman Catholic missionary at this point. Mr. Paquette is a native of the Province of Quebec, having been educated at Mariaville, in the county of Rouville. He has been here three years and likes the place very well, his chief complaint being the mosquitoes, whose powers of persecution he describes in vivid language. "They are so thick," he says, "that you could cut them by simply drawing a razor through the air." For three weeks, he told us, he had entrenched himself behind his net in bed, even eating his meals and saying his prayers there. But the mission, it should be mentioned, has been placed in a peculiarly favorable position for the operation of mosquitoes; in a bush on the bank of a lake, and with surrounding swamps. The Church of England mission is under the charge of the Rev. Mr. Mackenzie, a native missionary. His residence is on the other side of the bay, and we were, therefore, unable, for want of time, to call upon him. The Indians in the vicinity are all christianized, about four-fifths of them belonging to the Church of England. The chief and his councillors whom we met in morning, were all churchmen. We embarked at five o'clock and started on our trip eastward, with feelings of self-congratulation that we had been so fortunate as to overtake the steamer.

## LETTER XVII.

THE FAS MISSION—THE WORK OF THE CHURCH  
AMONG THE INDIANS—A CONFERENCE WITH  
THE CHIEF AND HIS COUNCILLORS—ON TO  
MOOSE LAKE—THE INDIAN PAYMENTS—WIND-  
BOUND AT CEDAR LAKE.

STEAMER NORTHCOOTE,  
11th September, 1879.

We reached the Saskatchewan in three-

quarters of an hour from the time we embarked on Monday evening, thus accomplishing the distance we had been seven hours in making, on our way in, in forty-five minutes, and Capt. Griggs says we came down very slowly. Having reached the river, we hauled up for the night, as we were desirous of seeing the route by daylight. At five on Tuesday morning we started for the Pas, the point from which my last letter was dated. There was nothing noticeable on the way; the river presents a monotonous appearance of low banks, and the country on each side is swampy and fit only for shooting or hunting. The Pas Mission presents a very pretty appearance on approaching it. The Church is a large, and, for this part of the country, an imposing looking building, with spire and belfry, the most imposing Church edifice we had seen in the Northwest, and wanting only a little paint to make it quite equal to many of those to be seen in Canadian towns. The post of the Hudson's Bay Company is to the right of it, nearly adjoining it, and the mission house, a very comfortable looking dwelling, is situated on the rising ground to the left. Further to the left was the tent of the Indian Agent, at which the Dominion flag was flying. He had just concluded the payment of the treaty money, and crowding the banks were large numbers of Indians, with their squaws and children. A flag at the Hudson's Bay post, another at the mission house, a third at a free trader's—a Mr. Clement, who claims to be a nephew of Mark Twain—on the opposite side of the river, and that at the Agent's tent, gave the place quite a holiday appearance as we approached it. The soil about here is very rocky and stoney, what there is of it, but, as I have said, it is largely swamp and morass, especially so on the north side, the south side gradually becoming somewhat better as it approaches the Pas Hills.

We found every thing in the greatest bustle. The work of paying the Indians had been finished the day before, but then came the collection of debts on the part of the Hudson's Bay Company's storekeeper, and the free traders competing with them, for advances made to the Indians. This general settling up of accounts had been going on the evening before and that morning, and was about finished, when the unexpected arrival of the steamer increased the hurry, as both Mr. Belanger, the Company's Manager for this district, who is on his way to Winnipeg, and Mr. Mackay, the Indian Agent, were anxious to take advantage of her to reach

Grand Rapids in time for the Colville, and thus escape a long journey in open boats.

We called upon the Rev. Mr. Cochrane, the missionary of the Church of England, who is a native Indian, but speaks English most fluently, and with a charming accent. From him we obtained some interesting particulars of the position of the mission work in this part of the Northwest, which has the good fortune to be under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Rupert's Land. The Indians are all professing Christians, and with two exceptions are all adherents of the Church of England. The exceptions are Roman Catholics, but they are married to Protestant women, and their families are being brought up as members of the Church. The church edifice holds between four and five hundred, and on special occasions, as at Christmas and Easter, is too small for the congregations that assemble. The ordinary congregation each Sunday numbers from two hundred to two hundred and fifty souls. Mr. Cochrane informed us that last Sunday one hundred and seventy-five persons partook of holy communion. The people in fact are earnest church-goers, and are showing the fruits of their conversion by lives of improved morality. There is a mission at Grand Rapids, connected with that at the Pas, which is under the charge of a native catechist, who is licensed by the Bishop to preach, and who is doing an excellent work among the Indians of that district. Mr. Cochrane visits the Grand Rapids missions about once each month or six weeks, to marry those who may desire to be married, to baptise the children, and to administer on occasion the Lord's Supper. He has also a station at the Pas hills, which he also visits from time to time, the distance being about seventy miles. The interior of the church is very neat. The communion table is railed off, as in most churches, and behind it is a reredos, upon which are the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments in the Cree language. At each side of the Communion railing, is a pulpit of the old-fashioned egg-stand style, which, I presume are used as lecturns as well. The pews are very comfortable, without doors, a row on each side of the aisle, which on special occasions is also filled with worshippers. The congregation is regularly organized, with its Church wardens, and its delegates to the Diocesan Synod. The mission was established and the Church erected, by the Church Missionary Society thirty-five years



ago, and the clergyman still derives his chief income from the Society, although it is in part supplemented by contributions from the Indians, who pay in kind, the currency being chiefly rat skins. The advantage of the employment of native missionaries is very great, although I was surprised to learn, not, however, from Mr. Cochrane, who made no reference to the subject, that the Society pays missionaries from England—who in the nature of things must for a long time labour under great disadvantages—twice as much as it pays to the native missionaries. There is a school-house on the Church property, and formerly the Church Missionary Society sustained a school master at this point. There is no school master there now; but Mr. Cochrane teaches the school, having upon the register fifty-five children out of a population of school age of about a hundred, within an area of two miles from the school house. We met here also the Rev. Pere Gaste, the Roman Catholic Missionary at Cariboo, or Deer Lake. He is on his way to Winnipeg to see his Diocesan, Monseigneur Grandin, who has just returned from France, where he has been for the last two years. Pere Gaste's mission is to induce the Bishop to establish convents at the Cariboo and Cumberland Missions, his opinion being that the Indians can best be reached through the family, and this can best be done through the efforts of Christian women.

Before the boat left we were informed that the chief and his councillors were anxious to have an interview with Mr. Brydges, in order to represent, through him, their grievances to the Government. The interview was granted, the Rev. Mr. Cochrane acting as interpreter. It was the old story of unfulfilled treaty obligations, a story to which it has been a humiliation to be compelled to listen. Their reserve had not yet been surveyed, although the survey had been promised to them by the agent year after year. They want the cattle which were promised to them, but which have never been given to them. They want a larger number of farming implements, especially of hoes, which are most useful in the stony land which prevails here. The plows given to them were prairie breaking plows, which are of no use here. They also would like to have a hand mill, as they are beginning to grow some wheat, and the mill would enable them to convert it into flour. They are now raising some wheat and barley at the Birch River and at the Pas Mountain. They want the Government to

furnish them with seed for the first three years, and after that they think they can get on without further aid of this kind; and they also want some provisions to be given them during the seed-time, as they have heard that this had been done for the Indians on the plains. The provisions which have been furnished to them they say were good, except the flour, which is put up in too thin bags, and has come to them damaged, to the extent of at least ten per cent. They complain that they are in arrears one year with their treaty money. They are included in treaty No. 5, but only adhered the second year. What they say is, that their non-adhesion the first year was not their fault, as they were not asked to do so, and as they gave in their adhesion when asked, they claim that they should be paid from the date of the treaty. They have heard of the present of \$12 given to each Indian on his adhesion, on the plains. They do not ask the present, but they think the sum mentioned in the treaty should be paid to them. And they also ask that some simple medicines and some surgical instruments should be left for their use, either at the Hudson's Bay Company's post, or at the mission. They are deeply interested about the education of their children, and they want the Government to assist them in this. By the treaty they are promised one school and school-master, but these have never been given them. They have themselves built a schoolhouse at the Eddy, about four miles away, but have no teacher. They are anxious that the Government should allow them four teachers, one at the Pas, where there are a hundred children of school age; one at the Eddy, where there are eighty children; one at Birch River, about thirty miles off, where there are thirty children; and one at the Pas Mountains, seventy miles off, where there are fifty children. They appeared very earnest in pressing this request, and they say that, although not included in the treaty, it was promised them verbally by Mr. Thomas Howard, the Government agent.

Mr. Brydges assured them that he would convey their wishes to the Government, and then, after three hours most pleasantly spent, we started for Moose Lake, which we were to take in on our route to Grand Rapids. The Indians gathered on the shore and gave us three hearty cheers as the steamer moved off. Three hours brought us to a branch of the Saskatchewan, leading to Moose Lake, into which we turned. It is a narrow stream with frequent shoal-water, very sharp curves, and

overhanging brushwood and trees on either side. The run up was somewhat difficult, and the rubbing of the brush wood on the steamer, the crackling of branches and the occasional scraping on the bottom, combined with the darkness which prevailed, were anything but agreeable. At about half-past one in the morning we reached the mouth of Moose Creek, and there laid to until daylight, when we proceeded up the Creek. It was very narrow, very circuitous, but for a creek very deep, and beyond occasional scrapings on the banks, we got through without difficulty, and entered the Lake. The mate was at the bow with the pole to test the depth of the water. "Five feet"—"four feet"—"four feet scant"—"three feet"—"two feet six"—"two feet six scant"—"two feet"—uttered in monotones, each a little stronger than the preceding one, and in another moment we were aground. We backed off, and tried another channel, repeating the operation two or three times with the same result, when it was given up as a bad job, and we embarked on Mr. Mackay's York boat, a very fine one, which we had had in tow, and hoisting sail, ran in splendid style to Moose Lake House, where the Indians, who were waiting for the payments to be made, received us with a volley of musketry as a salute.

We had never seen the payments actually made, and were glad of the opportunity of witnessing the manner of doing it. Mr. Mackay erected his tent, the front thrown fully open, hoisted the Dominion flag, got a table and chairs, brought out his books and money, and went to work. Immediately on his right sat the Chief, in his red coat and wearing his medal, his councillors in their uniforms of blue frock coat and red facings being near to assist him, and the Indians squatted in a circle round the front of the tent. The Chief was first paid, then the councillors, and then the Indians generally. When a man was called, after some little delay, for it seemed hard to get them to answer to their names, the Indian would come forward and squat himself immediately in front of the Agent. Then came the questioning, the number of his family and of relatives dependent upon him, each of whom is entitled to five dollars. As the record of former years was before him, the Agent was able to put the questions very direct, and a short grunt indicated assent. The money was paid and the man retired into the ring. New comers arrived while the operation was going on,

and they would go round the circle shaking hands with all, before squatting.

These are occasions of great festivity. After the payments were made, the men went to settle their debts at the store, and then one of the houses was appropriated for the fun. An Indian fiddler furnished the music, and the young men and women went vigorously to work at the dance. The music is jiggy, but very monotonous, the musicians apparently knowing but one tune, and the dancing was a never varying shuffle, in which the feet were hardly lifted from the ground. The fiddler kept time with his feet in the most vigorous fashion. It was a sort of cut-and-come-again jig, kept up until the fiddler ceased his rasping from fatigue. The dancing and feasting, I was told, would go on all night. We left at about four o'clock in a York boat for the steamer, and started for Grand Rapids, reaching the Saskatchewan by a continuation of the branch by which we left the main channel. In the railway map this channel is not indicated as going further than Moose Lake, and the lake itself is placed too far north. It is about thirty miles from the Saskatchewan, and the post is about forty miles from Cedar Lake, by the route we have taken. The country is nearly all marsh and swamp, much of it is so completely under water as to resemble large lakes, separated from the river by narrow strips of land. Along the banks of Moose Creek, for a mile from the Lake, is a continuous hay field. Mr. Macdonald, the Company's agent, having just got through cutting it, it is piled in stacks, to be drawn in when the winter sets in. The district is a famous one for muskrats, as may be inferred from the fact that last year the Hudson Bay Company's posts, within the Cumberland district, purchased one hundred and thirty-four thousand skins, and the free traders probably obtained from thirty to forty thousand more. The rats have not yet commenced to build their homes for the winter. They are said to be most skilfully constructed, having the appearance of small hay stacks, and being arranged in the interior with singular regard to comfort.

We reached this point, five miles from Cedar Lake, this morning, and have been wind-bound all day, a strong north-west wind prevailing. The Northcote, built especially for river navigation, cannot venture upon the lake in stormy weather, and, at the time I write, it is impossible to say when we will get away, as the wind shows no signs of

abating. It is better, however, to be sure than sorry; and the prospect of a break-up in a lake ten fathoms deep, is not one to be coveted.

## LETTER XVIII.

WIND-BOUND AT CEDAR LAKE—THE CROSSING—  
THE DEMICHARS—HOW RAPIDS AND SHOALS  
ARE OVERCOME—RUNNING THE GRAND RAPIDS  
—THE STEAMER COLVILLE—LAKE WINNIPEG—  
THE ICELANDIC SETTLEMENT—THE RUN  
THROUGH LAKE WINNIPEG.

ON LAKE WINNIPEG, 13th September, 1879.

To our agreeable surprise, on Thursday evening, at about five o'clock, the steamer moved off from the point where we had remained all day and started for Cedar Lake. It was to some extent an experiment, for, although the wind had abated somewhat of its force, it had by no means entirely gone down. Five miles brought us to the lake, and we made the venture, hugging the shore as much as possible with a view of taking what is called the York boat route, instead of going, as is customary with the steamer, straight across. We had reason very soon to congratulate ourselves upon this decision. When about three-quarters of an hour out, a regular squall broke upon us, the wind whistling, and the waves rising in a manner anything but pleasant. The captain headed for an island, which has before this served him as a refuge in similar straits. We reached it safely, and tied up under its shelter, with the prospect, so far as our angry-looking sunset and weird clouds could be taken as indications, of being detained there for some time. The steamer, we were told, had been detained there as long as three days waiting for a calm lake to cross to the other side, a distance at this point of about twelve miles. We turned in, however, in the true Mark Tapley style, resolved that whatever our regrets, we should not permit them to affect our spirits. There was but one thought which troubled us. We were due in Winnipeg on the 10th or 12th, and as there is no means of communication, and has been none since we passed the Humbolt telegraph station, of the success of our messages from which point in getting through we had no assurance, delays we felt might cause some anxiety to friends at home.

At about three o'clock I was awakened by what appeared the preparations for a start; and at twenty minutes after three the steamer left her moorings for the venture across. The wind, which the morning before had been from the northwest, had completely veered round, and was blowing a pretty stiff breeze from the southeast, almost directly in our teeth in crossing. The moon had just risen, and reflected some light; but as we proceeded the clouds thickened, the moon disappeared, and the wind increased in force. Though not favorable to the speed of the steamer, it was the most favorable for her safety, and in an hour and a half we came abreast of Rabbit Point; the lake was crossed, all danger and chance of detention from wind was over, and the prospect of reaching Winnipeg not later than Sunday was an almost assured one. A little after reaching Rabbit Point, we passed through a very narrow gateway, formed of islands, and then into the open water for ten miles, when we emerged from the lake, and resumed our acquaintance with river navigation. The country is rocky, the shores presenting a front of limestone. There is some good spruce timber on each side of the river; the appearance of the country, in fact, changing very materially. The water, too, is clear, the first clear water we have seen in the Northwest, Cedar lake acting as a filtering basin for the waters of the Saskatchewan passing through it.

The leading feature of the navigation between Cedar Lake and the Grand Rapids which separate us from Lake Winnipeg, are the Demichar rapids, situated fifteen miles from the portage. They are the most serious obstruction to the navigation of the river, and as many as three days have been occupied in making the fifteen miles from Grand Rapids to the head of the Demichars. The steamer has to be hauled up by a rope of nearly a mile and a half long, fastened to the trees on the bank above, and then by means of the capstans, or as they are called here, the niggers, the steamer is pulled through. When heavily laden it is often a most serious undertaking, and at the last trip up, the larger nigger was broken, involving serious delay, and some injury to one of the men. The rigging of the Northcote for getting over rapids and shoals is very ingenious. On each side, in the forepart of the boat, are derricks or upright timbers of about twenty feet long, from which are slung round heavy pieces of timber of equal length. These

latter are dropped end ways in the water, and with ropes and pulleys attached to the sides of the steamer and the top of the timbers, the latter acting as a fulcrum, the vessel is literally lifted above and over the obstruction. It is a kind of steamboat pole vaulting, and is said to act like a charm. It is only in going up, however, that it is used, and we had not therefore the opportunity of seeing it in operation.

Approaching the Demichars, we stopped to pick up some timber which had been in preparation during the season for the erection of stables for the Company's use at the Grand Rapids. There was a considerable quantity of it, which the Indians, who were on board, carried in. They proved themselves to be very strong men. The timbers were in the shape of railway ties, thicker than the ordinary tie, and more than half as long again, some of them being twice as long. But the men shouldered them, a piece each, walked unconcernedly on to the barge, and tipped them into their places in the hold, with as much apparent ease as if they had been whip stalks. Further on we had to pick up the anchor which was used as a hold-on, at the head of the rapids, by the steamer in coming up. And then we ran the rapids, which are the most serious on the Saskatchewan, until the Grand Rapids are reached. A little further down we passed through another rapid, known as the Rocher Rouge, and at about eleven o'clock, came in sight of the buildings at Grand Rapids. On the banks of the river were the crew of Mr. Mackay's boat, which had left us the day before, when we were wind bound at the head of Cedar Lake. The wind, which prevented our proceeding, was a good assistance to them. They had come in under sail all the way, making the distance, forty-five miles, in the wonderfully short space of four hours.

The steamer Colville was waiting for us at the foot of the rapids, the portage being made by a tram railway of four miles in length. The cargo of furs and other goods had to be transported to the Colville, the accounts checked by the local manager of the company, and the steamer Northcote boomed in for the winter; work involving at least six or seven hours. We availed ourselves, therefore, of the courteous offer of Mr. Mackay to run the Grand Rapids in his boat, which he was starting off for the Red River. It was a splendid run. The rapids are about three miles long, and are very

turbulent, tossing the heavy York boat about as if it was a small bark canoe. The crew was a fine one, and pulled into the surge in magnificent style, until, the waves being too high for rowing, we drifted, under the guidance of our experienced steersman, who kept the boat in the channel, steering with a long oar. Except, perhaps, at the one pitch, where the channel goes round the projecting table rock, these rapids are much more formidable than those at Lachine. Having made the run down, we returned by the hand car—familiarily called the Pullman car—which is used by officers of the Company and others in making the portage, and whiled away the rest of the afternoon in watching the operation of booming the Northcote. She was hauled out about fifty feet from the shore, safely anchored, and three large pieces of timber chained together like a boom, were placed round her bow and sides, so as to prevent the ice from injuring her. The work was finished about 6 o'clock, the men gave three hearty cheers for Capt. Griggs, who leaves with us, for his home in Dakota, and steam navigation on the Saskatchewan for the year 1879 was pronounced to be over.

At half-past seven o'clock the last of the trucks with the goods for the Colville started, and mounted on the packages, we made our way across the portage. The steamer is an exceedingly fine one for her size. She was built about five years ago, and is said to be strong enough for a gun boat. She is driven by a screw, the boiler and engine being those formerly in use in the "Commissioner", the steamer whose place she has taken. She is of one hundred and thirty-five tons net register and can stand almost any sea, a matter of great importance in navigating Lake Winnipeg. She is not fitted up for carrying passengers, although on this trip, having the crew of the Northcote and a number of the Company's servants on board, she has a passenger list of fifty souls, including women and children. It is proposed during the winter to fit up saloon accommodation on the upper deck, which will enable her to afford comfortable berths for twenty-five passengers, besides providing a dining saloon.

Lake Winnipeg may fairly be classed as one of the great lakes. It is three hundred and twenty miles long, and at its broadest point, just after passing Long Point, the last of the mainland

that we see for some hours, it is eighty miles wide. It has an average depth, so far as has been ascertained of about nine fathoms of water. There are a number of islands in the Lake, many of which we pass, so that we can hardly be said ever to be wholly out of sight of land. The Icelandic settlement is on the shores of the lake, and upon one of the islands. Had time permitted, it was our intention to have visited the settlement; but the delays in reaching this point made us anxious to finish our journey. From what I can learn the settlement has not been a success, and indeed could hardly have been a success, seeing that the location selected for them is chiefly a miserable swamp, and that they must exist, if they exist at all, largely upon fishing. It certainly seems a great pity, if it was intended in good faith to test the possibility of converting these people from the high latitudes into good settlers, that a better location had not been selected for them. Some have already left, and taken up land in the territory of Dakota; and it is said others contemplate following their example. Lake Winnipeg requires some attention on the part of the Government in the way of lighting, &c.; but this is a subject, in connection with needed improvements on the Saskatchewan, which I must reserve for a separate letter.

## LETTER XIX

THE WATER COMMUNICATIONS OF THE NORTHWEST  
—THEIR IMPORTANCE AS HIGHWAYS FOR  
TRANSPORTATION—WHAT IS NECESSARY FOR  
THEIR IMPROVEMENT—VALUABLE RESULTS  
AT LITTLE COST.

LAKE WINNIPEG, 15th Sept., 1879.

The settlement of the Northwest will be largely aided by the great rivers which run through it in various directions, and they can be used to most materially supplement the railway system which has already been advocated in these letters. I propose to devote this one to a consideration of the improvements necessary to make the means of transportation by water available as a means of aiding settlement. In doing so, I will of necessity be compelled to repeat some facts already stated in former letters; but the reader will overlook this in view of the im-

portance of making the statement of the case complete. The Red River, which reaches from the southern boundary of Manitoba to Lake Winnipeg, has already daily lines of excellent steamers running upon it. The Assiniboine, which joins the Red River at Winnipeg, has this year been navigated by steamers to Fort Ellice, thus opening up a country forty miles south of the railway now contracted for. The great Saskatchewan river to the north, with its tributary, the south branch, opens up a vast extent of territory, and both the main river and the south branch will almost certainly be crossed by the Pacific Colonization Railway. At whatever points those crossings are located, steamers will run, traversing vast extents of excellent agricultural lands.

Already a line of steamers exists running from the lower stone fort on the Red River through Lake Winnipeg to the mouth of the Saskatchewan River at Grand Rapids, and from that point as far as Edmonton, near the base of the Rocky Mountains. Lake Winnipeg is three hundred and twenty miles long, and at its widest part eighty miles wide. Its depth is from five to fifteen fathoms. The Lower Fort is thirty miles from the entrance of the Red River into Lake Winnipeg. Thence to Grand Rapids is about two hundred and eighty miles. At the mouth of the Red River is a sand bar, on which there is not more than from five and a half to six and a half feet of water, not sufficient to give the necessary draught of water for the proper class of steamers to navigate so large, and in the fall of the year, so stormy a sheet of water, as Lake Winnipeg.

There are no lights on the lake, and as it has never been properly surveyed, there is no correct chart of it in existence. The bar at the mouth of the Red River requires dredging and proper lights placed there, and at one or two other places lights are required, when it would be quite possible to navigate the lake with ease and safety. At Grand Rapids there are large falls, about four miles above the mouth of the river, and quite three miles in length. They are a complete barrier to navigation, and, besides, the class of steamers suitable for the Saskatchewan river, cannot be made available for the transit of Lake Winnipeg. From a point just below the Grand Rapids, a tramway has been constructed by the Hudson's Bay Co., about three and a half miles in length, and along which goods are conveyed by horse-cars. At the upper end

of this tramway a line of two steamers run to Edmonton, a distance of about twelve hundred miles. These steamers can carry a large quantity of freight, and they are now being arranged so as to afford good accommodation for passengers. They are now run at very considerable cost, and at great risk, owing to the obstructions which exist at certain points. Having just come down the river from Prince Albert, partly in a York-boat, and partly by steamer, and having made careful enquiries, from all who are competent to afford correct information, I am enabled to state what is required to greatly improve the navigation. There are seven places between Grand Rapids and Prince Albert which require immediate attention.

The first is a long and swift rapid called Rocher Rouge, up which a steamer has to be assisted by a rope, worked by a steam capstan on the boat and fastened to a tree on the shore. By placing a pier near the head of the rapid the length of rope required would be reduced from three thousand feet to less than two thousand feet, and the time and difficulty of ascent materially diminished. The next obstruction is at the Demichars rapids, a very heavy piece of water, taking at present an entire day to ascend. The rope used is one mile and a quarter in length, having to be carried across a lake at the head of the rapids, and fastened to trees on the opposite shore. The erection of a pier just above the rapids would allow of a rope of not more than two thousand feet being used, and would be of very great advantage at this dangerous place. The next obstruction is at the Narrows, where a large boulder in the centre of the channel, requires to be removed.

The next place is Tobin's Rapids, a long shallow rapid. It sometimes takes two days to ascend these rapids, the steamer scraping the whole way up. A few rocks require to be taken out here, and a couple of wing dams constructed for which the materials are on the spot. This done the rapid would be easily ascended. Above Tobin's rapids are these named Nepowin, where some rocks require to be taken out in two places. The next place is the Little Rapids below Cole's Falls, where some rocks require to be removed. The next and seventh point is Cole's Falls, perhaps the worst place in the river. It was here, in a York boat drawing only one foot of water, that we struck a rock in the rapids, and hung over it for about half an hour. At this place several rocks

require to be removed and wing walls constructed, for which again there are ample materials on the spot.

The works named at these seven places would most materially improve the navigation—would give in low water at the worst places a depth of three and a half feet instead of less than two feet as at present—and would enable the boats to run with regularity and comfort from the 1st of June to the 1st of October. There are rocks requiring to be removed between Prince Albert and Edmonton, but not having gone personally over that portion of the river I cannot speak about them definitely. But I think it is safe to say, from all the information I have been able to obtain, that the improvements I have mentioned between Prince Albert and the mouth of the Red River, including what will be required up to Edmonton, could all be completed for about \$50,000. That is a small sum for which to improve the navigation for a distance of nearly sixteen hundred miles, and which would ultimately prove of great advantage in placing important and valuable districts of country in easy means of communication with the railway system. All the plant required would be a dredge, which certainly will be required for other places, and for the Saskatchewan a couple of stout barges with large lifting cranes to be worked by steam. The line of steamers already exists, and it only needs the improvements I have named to make them of the greatest possible service in the development of the settlement and trade of the country. The south branch of the Saskatchewan will no doubt also hereafter require to be improved. One of the steamers already mentioned has been up this branch about sixty miles. The south branch runs nearly to the Cypress Hills, and by the junction with the Bow, Belly and Red Deer rivers, can be made to reach Fort McLeod, Fort Calgary and other points at the base of the Rocky Mountains. The extent of country that would thus be brought into connection with the railway system would be enormous. As a large number of the Indian reserves are placed on the various rivers I have mentioned, the time and economy saved to the Government in transporting the supplies sent to the Indians will be very great, as the system of navigation becomes enlarged and improved.

The steamers at present running between the Red River and Edmonton belong to the

Hudson's Bay Company, having been built to accommodate their own trade in sending supplies to, and receiving furs from, their posts along the Saskatchewan and as far north as the Mackenzie River. They are sufficient to take care of all the general trade that will arise at present, and can be increased as the necessity arises. The cost of transport, both for passengers and freight, by using these boats, can be largely reduced, compared with carting by land. The "Colville" is the name of the steamer running from the lower fort on the Red River to the mouth of the Saskatchewan. She is a very strongly built wooden screw steamer, and does her work remarkably well. She runs about ten miles an hour in smooth water. The depth of water on the bar has fixed her size. When fully loaded she draws seven and a half feet of water, and has to have part of her cargo taken out in a schooner, and loaded after she has passed the bar. The dredging of the sand bar for about a hundred by forty yards would enable her to cross fully loaded, and also permit of a larger vessel being constructed when the necessity for it arises. The absence of any lights prevents the steamer crossing the bar, except during daylight. She takes from thirty-one to thirty-four hours to run the distance. From Grand Rapids the steamer Northcote runs up to Carlton. She is a stern-wheel steamer of the ordinary Mississippi style, built of wood. She will be able to accommodate twenty-five to thirty cabin passengers. She can make the round trip, up and down, in fourteen days, if the improvements suggested are carried out, and can then fully accommodate all the trade for some time to come. Her capacity for freight can be largely increased by the use of barges which she can tow.

From Carlton to Edmonton the line is completed by the steamer "Lily." She is also stern-wheeled, and was built in England of steel and was sent out. An iron or steel boat is not suitable for a shallow river with rocky falls and boulders, and it is proposed to build a new wooden hull for her present engines, which are good and powerful. She will carry all the freight and passengers required. Both these vessels are provided with large derricks, placed in the bow, and which, worked by the engines, haul them across the sand bars which are met with in the upper portions of the river.

When it is stated that, to cart freight from Winnipeg to Edmonton takes from fifty to seventy days, according to weather and the state of the roads, and costs ten cents a

pound, the necessity of improving the navigation between these points becomes of enormous importance to the development of the country. The steamers, when the obstructions specified have been removed, will do the work easily in twenty days up and ten days down, and at about one-half the cost. The saving of time and cost to passengers will be equally important.

All the improvements named will be equally valuable after the railway reaches the crossing of the river. The boats will then run to and from the places where the bridges are located, and will still more rapidly and cheaply accommodate the country. The importance to the development and growth of the country of putting these works of improvement in hand without delay cannot be over-estimated.

## LETTER XX.

THE TRIP THROUGH LAKE WINNIPEG—DETENTIONS BY STORMS—RED RIVER—SELEIRK AND THE RAILWAY BRIDGE—THE SETTLEMENT BELT AND THE HAY PRIVILEGE.

WINNIPEG, 15th September, 1879.

Our anticipations of getting here at the latest by Sunday, have not been realized. We left Grand Rapids on Saturday morning at four o'clock, and had a delightful sail to Swampy Islands, where the channel becomes more difficult owing to shoals. As it had clouded over and promised to be a dark night, the steamer was anchored at about ten o'clock, for the night. Soon the wind rose, a strong southeaster, and the ship swinging round at times in the trough of the waves, rolled most vigorously, pitching things about without the slightest regard to consequences. It was a miserable night and not many on board enjoyed any sleep. Yesterday morning the wind continued—Winnipeg showed us what it could do in the way of waves, and the Colville pitched and rolled with a steadiness that would have done credit to an ocean steamer in a high sea. The wind continued all day, increasing in violence, as evening approached, and the captain resolved again to anchor, taking advantage of a delightful bay, known as George's Bay, which is completely sheltered from the wind, for that purpose. On the shores were

two or three Icelanders houses, but it was too late to think of visiting them. About midnight the wind changed to the west, the change being accompanied by a heavy rain and hail-storm. It soon, however, cleared up, and at about five o'clock we weighed anchor, and started for the sixty mile run down to Red River. Sail was set, the wind favouring, and although the rolling was somewhat inconvenient to those who cannot stand a rough sea, we made a splendid run down the sixty miles in five hours and a half. It was wonderful how much a clear blue sky and bright sunshine affected the spirits of of all on board, from the good skipper, Captain Hackland, down even to the train of Esquimaux dogs which were being brought down for a return trip in winter by Mr. Matheson, the company's manager at Grand Rapids, and which the day before had followed other unfortunates in paying tribute to Neptune. It was rough, to be sure; but then it was clear and bracing, and every one on board was in good spirits, excepting, perhaps, poor Pere Gaste, who is a very bad sailor.

The entrance to the Red River is very circuitous, the channel being marked by buoys placed in it by the Hudson's Bay Company. When we get fairly into it, the land on each side for the first few miles is low and swampy, resembling in appearance, with its tall, thin grass, the four miles slough through which we passed before reaching Palestine on our first night out. Then the country improves and settlement commences, the first settlement being on the Indian Reserve, upon which the Indians, as a rule, have discarded their teepees and wigwams, and taken to log houses, cultivating a portion of the land, and thus being the pioneers in the matter of Indian farming, from which so much is expected in the future. Presently, we came in sight of St. Peter's Church, a very handsome stone edifice, with a substantial stone wall surrounding it, and enclosing the church yard. It belongs to the Church of England, and is under the pastoral charge of the Rev. Mr. Cook. Nearly opposite to it is the residence of Archdeacon Cowley, also of stone, a very large and comfortable looking building. The scenery at this point is very pretty, the river bending backwards and forwards, and the trees extending almost down to the water's edge. At points it has the same park-like appearance which I have remarked in other parts of the country.

Presently we came to Selkirk, famous as the site of the settlement founded by Lord Selkirk years ago, and recently famous as the terminus of the Thunder Bay section of the Pacific Railway. It is a small place, built on a narrow ridge of land, flanked on the one side by the river and on the other by swamp. The steamer stopped for a moment to enable us to have a look at the site of the proposed railway bridge, the wood being cleared on the right of way down to the river's edge. Among the many blunders which have characterized the location of the Pacific Railway, this is certainly not among the least. The river at this point is eight hundred and fifty feet wide, the water in the centre about twenty feet deep, and the bottom, of mud, to an almost limitless depth. The bridge, if built here, therefore, would involve piers in the water, which could only be constructed at great cost. On the east side, back from the river for two thousand four hundred feet, is a swamp which would involve either that extent of additional bridging, or most expensive earth embankments, and on the west side, there is a narrow ridge of land, and then, as Captain Hackland expressed it, all swamp for half a mile back. It is impossible to understand the utter fatuity which prompted the selection of such a position for the bridge; but it is, after all, simply of a piece with the general results which have followed, as far as the Northwest is concerned, from the enormous outlay in engineering on the route of the Pacific Railway. Further down, at the Stone Fort, as it is called, there is an admirable site for a bridge, banks high and solid, and the river narrow enough to enable it to be spanned without placing piers in the water. If it is intended to bridge the Red river below Winnipeg at all, that is undoubtedly the proper place for the bridge. My own view, however, is that since the route has been changed to south of Lake Manitoba, it would be better not to construct any bridge there; but to use the road now built to St. Boniface, and connect by a bridge at that point with the western extension. Starting from a point a few miles from the river, on the Thunder Bay section, the line could be inclined towards Winnipeg, at very much less cost than would be necessary for the construction of the bridge above at the most favorable point. Of course such a course would be a disappointment to the people of Selkirk, and possibly to others who have bought land, in the belief that the railway would cross



there. But these are not considerations which should for a moment stand in the way of a sensible policy being now pursued.

From Selkirk to the Stone Fort is five miles. The lower or stone fort of the Hudson's Bay Company is a very formidable looking place; the buildings are of stone, surrounded by a solid stone wall about six feet high, and pierced with port holes for the use of a defending army. It was thus built originally as a defence against the supposed warlike tendencies of the Indians; but it has never been used as a fortress, the Indians evidently preferring to trade rather than to fight with the white men; unless indeed we can consider it to have been so used when a portion of the expeditionary force, under General Wolseley, visited the Red River in 1870. The Colville does not go any further up the river, except in spring when the water is very high. Her freight is transferred here to river steamers, which take it to Winnipeg. There was no steamer going up this evening and we accordingly took a horse and buggy, and drove into the city. The road is a good one in dry weather; I cannot, from what I hear, vouch for its excellence during the wet season. It skirts the river all the way, so that on our left we had houses and trees, and on our right the prairie. It is a continuous settlement all the way, many of the settlers being half-breeds, who appear to be doing well. The wheat was nearly all in, in some cases we saw the threshing machines hard at work. Enormous stacks of the prairie hay showed the provision that had been made for the cattle in winter, and the number of fine cattle all along the road was evidence that the provision was none too lavish.

These settlements are in what is called the settlement belt of the Red River. I dare say some of the readers of the GAZETTE, if they have concerned themselves about Manitoba politics at all, have been a good deal confused in the effort to understand what was meant by that bone of contention the "hay privilege." When the country was taken over by the Canadian Government, the settlement belts of the Red River and the Assiniboine were reserved for the resident half-breed population. They consisted of lots of from three to ten chains on the river front, and extended two miles back. But the half-breeds claimed that in addition to these reservations, for which they received patents from the Crown, they should have the right to cut hay on a further area of two miles behind the reserva-

tions, and this, after some controversy, was given to them, foolishly, I believe, but under the influence of the panic in which unfortunately the Province was incorporated with the Dominion. This belt of four miles is not included in the township areas that have been surveyed, but forms a special settlement by itself. As we neared the city, the houses and farms improve in appearance. We passed three missions of the Church of England, and within about two miles of Winnipeg came upon St. John's College, erected by the Bishop of Rupert's Land, and which is doing an excellent work. Near it is a very fine brick building, a new school for girls, just erected in connection with the College. We reached the city at six o'clock, glad of the termination of a journey which, although it has involved some fatigue and some hardships, has been one of great pleasure as well, and of great profit in the information it has brought with it. I have done my best to enable my very good friends, the readers of the GAZETTE, to share with me the knowledge that the last four weeks have brought with them. Another letter, of a general character, and my "Chronicles by the way" will have been ended.

## LETTER XXI.

THE LAND QUESTION—THE AMERICAN SYSTEM—  
THE AMERICAN RAILWAY IMMIGRATION  
AGENTS AND THEIR WORK—END OF THE  
"CHRONICLES BY THE WAY."

WINNIPEG, 16th September, 1879.

I have said that there are two burning questions which are interesting intensely the people of Manitoba and the Northwest. With one of these, the railway question, I have already dealt at some length in two letters. The other, the land question, I propose to deal with in this. The recent regulations issued by the Government for the disposal of lands in this Province and the Northwest territories, are the subject of general discussion, and a determined effort is being made by opponents of the Government to discredit them. This perpetual agitation, accompanied by statements of the greater advantages offered by the American land laws, have been a trump card in the hands of American immigration agents, and as a re-

sult, it is certainly true that some families who had intended coming into the Province, have been diverted to Dakota, and have settled in that territory. Those who defended the regulations of the late Government have certainly little ground for their present attitude of hostility to the policy of the present Administration. The recent regulations have in them that which the former ones lacked, namely the element of certainty. If a man takes up land he knows what he will have to pay for it. Formerly this was not the case. His pre-emption lot was fixed in the meantime at a dollar an acre; but he was bound hereafter to pay for it any price the Government chose to place upon it. This element of uncertainty as to price had, as one may readily imagine, a most injurious influence upon the settlement of the country. That, as I have said, is removed by the regulations which have recently been issued.

There are certain considerations which, as I gathered in conversations with all kinds of people on this subject, ought to be borne in mind in the framing of land laws for the great North-west, and these, rather than any opinions of my own, I propose to give you in this letter. It may be as well, in the first instance, to explain to my readers in the East what is meant by the terms "homestead" and "pre-emption." The same principle of survey which obtains in the Western States, has been adopted by the Canadian Government. The country is divided into what are called sections of six hundred and forty acres each. In the States, the "homestead" consists of a quarter section, or one hundred and sixty acres. This is a free grant to the actual settler. Then he is permitted to purchase at a fixed price an additional quarter section, and this is called a "pre-emption." Very many of the settlers who go into the country take up a homestead and pre-emption, making together a farm of three hundred and twenty acres; and the recent regulations have, it is understood, been founded upon the opinion that that is too large a farm for a man without capital to properly cultivate. The regulations evidently do not contemplate farms of eighty acres, for that in this country would be too small. They seek to restrict the farms to the quarter section, and they offer the easiest possible terms for the obtainment of the eighty acres pre-emption. Whether this system of selling the lands and giving ten years for the payment, is a prudent one, is another question. If the object is to pre-

vent settlers without sufficient means at tempting to farm a half section, that object would seem to be as easily obtained by requiring the full payment of the price of the pre-empted lot, at the time of purchase; while it would enormously lessen the work of the department, and prevent, what the experience in old Canada proves to be anything but desirable, possible difficulty hereafter in making collections from individual settlers.

In speaking of the railway question, I referred to the experience of the Americans in carrying railways through every part of the Western States, as one by which we might well profit. The feeling here is that the same thing may be said of their land laws, and of their success, by means of them, in settling the great West. The common remark is that what Yankees don't know on this subject is hardly worth learning. They have used the lands largely to aid in the building of railways. It is true that in their case the railways have been built by private companies, aided by land grants; but if the Canadian Government will assume itself to be, for the purpose of building the railway, a private company, the conditions are practically the same. The railway reservations of land in the States consist of belts of twenty miles on each side of the railway proposed to be built. Alternate sections of this belt are granted to the railway company and retained by the government respectively. The Government lands outside of this belt are disposed of as homestead and pre-emption lands, each a quarter section, or one hundred and sixty acres, the pre-emption lot being sold at a uniform price of a dollar and a quarter an acre, payment of the full amount in cash being required. The reserved alternate sections were, up to this year, disposed of as homestead and pre-emption; the homestead being only eighty acres, and the pre-empted lot being sold at two dollars and fifty cents an acre. It was held in fact that lands within the reservation were worth double as much as those without it, and on that ground the homestead grant was reduced one-half in size and the pre-emption doubled in price. At the last session of Congress, however, a change was made in the law relating to the railway reservations, by which the homesteads were increased to one hundred and sixty acres, the price of the pre-empted lots remaining the same, double that of the land outside of the belt. It is understood that the change was made at the in-

stance of the railway companies, whose interest it is that the Government reserves should be occupied as soon as possible. They have a double interest in this. In the first place, every additional settler means additional traffic for the railway; and in the second place, until the Government reserves are disposed of, they make slow progress in selling their lands, which, as a general rule, they hold at a minimum of five dollars an acre. Under this change in the law, therefore, the homesteads throughout the Western States, both within and without the railway reservations, are one hundred and sixty acres.

People ask why may not the Canadian Government adopt the same principle? It must not be forgotten that the competition for settlers between the United States and the Canadian Great West is very intense and very active. The Americans in this race have one great advantage over us, from the fact that they have a number of private corporations deeply interested in settling the lands. The order of immigration agents that one meets with in every quarter are, in the majority of instances, employees of the railway companies, who are paid, in addition to salaries, a per capita commission upon the people they induce to settle in the country, and who may be dismissed at a moment's notice, without fear of any cry about the British civil service system, if they are found not to be up to the requirements of their work. You will find these agents on every train and every steamer coming west. They have an eye that enables them to detect an immigrant at a glance, and they pounce upon him with the manner of a life-long friend concerned only for his interests. If it is necessary, they will even offer to accompany the immigrant to the land office, to assist him in making his selection, and will even go with him on to the lot itself to help him in the initial steps of settlement. I described one of these men in my letter sent you just after I reached Winnipeg, nearly five weeks ago, and I have since learned that he was but a type of a class who literally swarm in the West, and who invade every means of transport of immigrants seeking new homes. Against them we have to pit two or three immigration agents, who, I dare say, perform their duties as officers of the government in a very proper manner, but who are utterly unequal to the task of coping with such an army, impelled by such motives.

That is the condition of things that obtains here, and it is naturally felt that the Government agents, already so heavily handicapped, labour under an additional disadvantage, when there are differences in the land laws which may be made to appear to the prejudice of Canada. In the case of the American agent on the train to Winnipeg, to whom I have already referred, I found his trump card was the fact that the homestead in the United States was a hundred and sixty acres, and in Canada only eighty. At that time my knowledge of the subject was not sufficient to enable me to form an opinion as to the relative merits of the two systems. But everything I have heard since has convinced me that in the Canadian Northwest territory itself, and among the men who have settled there, and who are working out a future of wealth and prosperity for themselves and for the country, the influence of this argument is felt to be very strong.

There is very much to be said in favor of the Government plan; in favor of discouraging the taking up of too large farms by persons with limited means; and in favor of making the settler feel that in his farm of one hundred and sixty acres, which he can get at a wonderfully reasonable price, he has got something for which he has paid, however little. In the best part of the country, within the fifteen mile belt outside of the reservation of five miles on each side of the railway, the actual cost of a farm of a hundred and sixty acres to the farmer is as follows:—He gets eighty acres for nothing, and if he pre-empt's other eighty acres, at the end of three years he pays four-tenths of the purchase money,

\$200 .....	\$80 00	
With interest .....	36 00	
		\$116 00
Fourth year, \$20, with interest .....	\$7 20	27 20
Fifth year, \$20, with interest .....	6 00	26 00
Sixth year, \$20, with interest .....	4 80	24 80
Seventh year, \$20, with interest .....	3 60	23 60
Eighth year, \$20, with interest .....	2 40	22 40
Ninth year, \$20, with interest .....	1 20	21 20

The whole 160 acres costing him in ten years ..... \$261 20  
 Except, therefore, as the question is effected by the element of competition with the United States, that certainly seems a suffi-

ciently favorable arrangement. This element, however, is one which cannot be ignored, and there is a very strong feeling that it would be wise to so change the regulations as to make the homesteads the same area as in the United States. If the Government yields to this opinion, I hope at the same time that they will exact full payment in cash for the pre-empted quarter sections. That, as I have said, will prevent persons without any capital from attempting to secure a farm of three hundred and twenty acres, and will thus meet what seems to have been the view in the adoption of the eighty acre system.

There is, in some quarters, an opinion, although it is not a very general one, against the large and somewhat complicated system of reservation that has been made. People ask, as I have said, why not adopt the American system? In view of the competition in the matter of immigration, there would be an advantage if the two systems were precisely the same. In that case, the sentiment of loyalty which prompts so many to seek their homes under the British flag, would not be interfered with by fine drawn arguments in favor of the American land system, as distinguished from the Canadian. There does not seem to be much difficulty in the way. If the Government would make a reservation of twenty miles on each side of the railway; reserve alternate twenty mile sections as railway lands, say at five dollars an acre, and open the other alternate sections to quarter section homestead and pre-emption—the pre-emption price being two dollars and a half an acre; and then throw open all the rest to homestead and pre-emption at a dollar and a quarter, the thing could be done. The reserved railway sections might not sell rapidly in the meantime; but as the others became settled they would sell, and would bring a handsome return to the Government. That plan would have the element of simplicity about it, which is of all things important when we consider that it is not the educated or culti-

vated class we are appealing to. It would be the American system, and would, therefore, take from the railway and immigration agents in the States what has, during recent years, been their trump card, viz: the chance of drawing long bows on the subject of the differences between the two systems. And it would yield, I am confident, a greater direct, and an immeasurably greater indirect, return to the Government.

I have dealt with this question, as with others upon which I have written in these letters, with the most perfect freedom. In the presence of the great interests which are involved in the settlement of these territories, all mere party or personal considerations sink into utter insignificance. The record of the Government's dealing with Northwest matters during the last five years, has been a record of stupendous and expensive blunders. No one can have travelled as I have done during the last four weeks over this country, without realizing how important to its future development and prosperity it is that wise measures should be taken in connection with its railway and land policy. I have travelled, in a direct line westward from Winnipeg, a distance greater than that between Montreal and Sarnia, and it is certainly no exaggeration to say over a country, in its average, infinitely superior for agricultural purposes; and I have after all but skirted the borders of this magnificent region. How shall we convert it into a prosperous settlement of happy and contented Canadians, makes a problem worthy of the best efforts of statesmanship, and far transcending any questions of mere party politics. It is in this conviction and in this spirit that these letters have been written; and if I have been so fortunate through them as to create a greater interest in the Northwest, upon whose development the future of the Dominion depends, I will feel that my "Chronicles by the Way" have not been written in vain.

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